

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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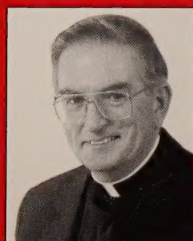
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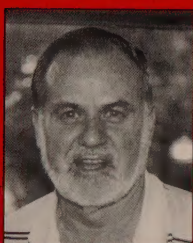
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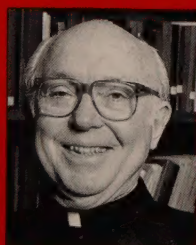
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Volume 27 : Number Two : Summer 2006

Contents

5
Discipleship as Peace-Building: Living and Ministering in Right Relationship,
Becoming Instruments of Transformation
Luisa M. Saffiotti, Ph.D.

10
Revisiting the Johari Window: Improving Communications Through
Self-disclosure and Feedback
Terry R. Armstrong, Ph.D.

15
Living with Discernment in Times of Transition
Joel Giallanza, C.S.C.

22
The Quality of Mercy
Kathy Coffey

25
The Very Rich Hours
James Torrens, S.J.

27
On Preparing for a Jubilee
Katherine Hanley, C.S.J., Ph.D.

30
Inside/Outside the Camp: Places of Encounter
J. Edward Owens, O.S.S.T., Ph.D.,
with responses by
Thomas H. Dymowski, O.S.S.T., M.Div., and William J. Moorman, O.S.S.T., Ph.D.

38
Towards a Spirituality of Academic Work: Lessons from Action Research
David Coghlan, S.J., Ph.D.

42
Moral Development: Strategies and Challenges
Thomas A. Shannon, Ph.D.

47
The Hearts of Children
Margaret Cessna, H.M.

2
ADVISORY BOARD

3
EDITOR'S PAGE
In the Image and Likeness of God

48
BOOK REVIEW
Hold Fast to Hope: Help for Caregivers of Those with Traumatic Injuries by Linda Perrone Rooney

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Manuscripts should be submitted to the Executive Editor, Linda Amadeo, either (1) as e-mail attachments in any Windows-based (not Macintosh) word-processing program from 2000 or earlier or (2) by mail (see addresses below). Unaccepted mailed manuscripts will not be returned unless submitted with a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 double-spaced pages), with no more than 6 recommended readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing. When quoting the Bible, the New Revised Version of the Bible is preferred.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide author name(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

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Editor's Page

THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD

In the Book of Genesis we read: "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (1:26). Jesus says: "Be perfect, therefore, as our heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). To be a human being, according to these readings, is to live in this world as images of God. It seems an impossible task on two grounds. First, we are finite and weak and cannot ever hope to live as images of God who is infinite and perfect. Second, God is unknowable Mystery, and if we cannot know God, how can we imitate God? Even if we say that God has revealed who God is, we are little better off, it seems, because there are so many images of God offered in the Scriptures. God is the generous creator of all human beings in the first chapter of Genesis, but God is also the one who kills the first-born sons of the Egyptians in order to force Pharaoh to set the Israelites free. God is the one who forgives Israel over and over again, but God is also the one who says to the Israelites in anger: "I will heap disasters upon them, spend my arrows against them: wasting hunger, burning consumption, bitter pestilence" (Deuteronomy 32:23-24), and only holds back, it seems, because of how it will look to outsiders. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they were told to destroy all the inhabitants of the land, an order of ethnic cleansing, as it were (cf. Joshua 6:15-17). Scripture has been used to justify many a horror in human history. What image, then, should we use to understand what it means to be a human being?

Of course the quick answer to the question of what image we should use is Jesus Christ, the image of God *par excellence*. But before we come to that image, I want to take a look at the privileged moment of God's revelation of Godself in the Hebrew Bible, the revelation to Moses at the burning bush.

But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations" (Exodus 3:13-15).

In the history of interpretation of this passage Western philosophers and theologians have tended to see ontological language in the words, "I am who I am." That is, the words are interpreted to mean that God is the Supreme Being, Being itself. But these words are notoriously difficult to translate. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), in a footnote, says, "Or I am what I am" or "I will be what I will be," and wherever the name YHWH occurs, NRSV translates it as LORD, as in the passage above. Oliver Davies, in *A Theology of Compassion: Metaphysics of Difference and the Renewal of Tradition* (a very hard read, I must say), notes that the rabbinic tradition has a different take on this revelation. There the name God revealed, YHWH, speaks of God's compassion for God's people, a compassion that will only be fully revealed over time. This compassion is associated with the word for womb and can be translated as "womb love," a compassion that is deeply felt and which leads the one who has such compassion to risk self for the other. God, in other words, at this critical time of the history of the world from a biblical perspective, reveals who God is, YHWH, and this name tells us that God is compassion itself. Davies quotes Rabbi Abba bar Mammal who said:

God said to Moses: I am called according to my acts. At times I am called El Shaddai, Seba'ot, Elohim and Yahweh. When I judge creatures, I am called Elohim; when I forgive sins, I am called El Shaddai; when I wage war against the wicked, I am called Seba'ot, and when I show

compassion for my world, I am called Yahweh.

Davies believes that we should take very seriously this self-revelation of God for the sake of the very world for which God shows compassion.

We Christians believe that God shows compassion in the most telling way in Jesus of Nazareth. God's compassion for the world leads God to risk Godself to the point of taking on human flesh and being killed for doing so. In his contemplation on the Incarnation Ignatius of Loyola asks us to imagine the Trinity looking down on the world and "seeing all the peoples in such great blindness, and how they are dying and going to hell" and then saying "Let us work out the redemption of the human race" (*Sp. Ex.*, n. 106, 107). In spite of what we read about God's blazing anger at sinful Israel in the passage of Deuteronomy quoted above, God, in compassion for us, decides to become one of us and in doing so takes the risk of being rejected and killed, as indeed happened. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). Here, then, is the image of God that we are to imitate. When Jesus says that we are to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, he means that we are to be compassionate.

For us to be compassionate means to feel so profoundly for others in trouble or pain that we will put ourselves at risk to help them. That's how God's compassion moves God to act. We live in this world as God's images insofar as we show compassion for others in the way God shows compassion. Since God is the creator of all human beings and, indeed, of the whole creation, we cannot limit our compassion to our own family, tribe, nation or creed.

But now the first objection comes strongly to the fore. We are too weak and sinful to live this way, to follow the way of Jesus. That kind of following of Jesus is only for the saints and heroes of our world, not for the likes of us. After all, Jesus was divine. How can we imitate him? Once I gave some talks on the human Jesus to seminarians in New Orleans. In the first one, I focused on how difficult it is for us to take seriously that Jesus was a real human being who had to be toilet trained, learn language, work out his vocation, discern the will of God, etc., just as we do. I then went on to say that we cannot do justice to our faith in his humanity unless we are willing to predicate such

human learning to him. After the break one of the seminarians was bold enough to make the following confession before his fellow seminarians and the faculty: "I realize why I don't take seriously that Jesus was a human being. If I do, I will have to imitate him." That, in a nutshell, is what it means to believe that Jesus is human as we are, sin alone excepted; he is human enough to be imitated by us. Moreover, since the dawn of the creation of human beings, we have been called to be images of God. In a way, you might say, God had to show us how to do it by becoming one of us. Because Jesus showed the compassion of God and thus risked his life for us, we have no excuses. We can do it because God creates us for this role and gives us the Spirit to move our hearts and minds to such compassion.

The only problem is that often when our hearts and minds are moved to compassion, we turn away because we don't want to take the risk. However, the future of our world depends on our willingness to live as the human beings God has created us to be. In Jesus God showed us how. What it means to be human is to allow our hearts to be touched by the plight of our fellow humans and to take action that puts us at risk for the sake of the other.

According to Matthew 25 we will be judged by how well we show compassion for those in need.

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25: 37-40).

Clearly Jesus believes that it is possible for us to show compassion, so possible that we are culpable if we do not. The future of our planet depends on us, on how we live as images and likenesses of God.

Bill Barry, S.J.

William A. Barry, S.J.
Editor-in-Chief

Discipleship as Peace-Building:

Living and Ministering in Right Relationship, Becoming Instruments of Transformation

Luisa M. Saffiotti, Ph.D.



This article was presented at a HUMAN DEVELOPMENT magazine workshop during the pastoral conference, “Reasons for Hope in a Difficult Time,” held in November 2005 at the College of Saint Elizabeth in Morristown, N.J. In this written version, I include the questions for reflection and discussion I gave to the workshop group, and invite readers to take some time to sit quietly with those questions, in order to enter into the full experience of the workshop. I also include some of the insights, observations, and questions that participants shared with the group after a time of personal reflection.

INTRODUCTION

The theme of “signs of hope in difficult times” led me to reflect on the way God breaks in to human history in difficult times, particularly in conditions of suffering, injustice, and conflict. It is only when the cracks start appearing in our comfortable, protective suits of armor, in our illusions of “all-rightness,” of all being well in the world—both in our local, personal world, and in the wider, global world—that we are reminded of our need for *God* to be God. It is when that we are reminded, often painfully, that we are *not* God, and that, on our own, we do not manage to run things very well.

Discipleship is about giving oneself over to being an instrument of the Gospel, which requires thinking hard about what it means really to be an instrument of the Gospel.

As Christians, we are called to collaborate with the “in-breaking” of God into our lives and into the world through discipleship, to which we are all called by virtue of our Baptism. Whatever our state in life, our particular vocation, each one of us is called to bear witness to the Gospel by the way we live and minister. It is in the way we take up the call to discipleship that we will either become signs of hope by truly making God present—the God of Jesus—or deny hope by failing to allow the God of Jesus to break in.

Christian discipleship is Gospel-centered, and, in these deeply troubling times we live in, we make the Gospel relevant and meaningful by peace-building. We need to be about building right-relationships at all levels, and thus about allowing the in-breaking of God’s love so as to transform the current difficult reality into a cause for hope.

I would now like to “unpack” some of the terms in the title of this article, identify some of the skills necessary for transformation to occur, and consider the credibility of our discipleship. I will then give two questions for reflection, and share some of the fruits that emerged from participants’ reflections at the workshop.

TERMS

We could easily spend days, semesters, discussing each of the words in the title. I simply wish to clarify how I am using the terms.

Discipleship: Discipleship, in a Christian context, is about following behind Jesus of Nazareth—not telling him where *we* would like to go. It is about being with Jesus; following the humble, poor, chaste, obedient, transparent Jesus. It is not about following power, prestige, or the pull not to rock the boat. Discipleship is about giving oneself over to being an instrument of the Gospel, which requires thinking hard about what it means really to be an instrument of the Gospel. What does it mean in times when the Christian message is

often and easily co-opted for ends that have very little, if anything, to do with the Gospel?

Peace-building: When we talk about peace-building, the emphasis is on *building*, as opposed to, for instance, *peace-keeping*. Peace-building involves a commitment to address and transform both (1) the *immediate suffering* produced by injustice, conflicts, violence, poverty, and ecological degradation, and (2) the *structural causes* of suffering. Peace-building is about recognizing what constitutes right-relationship and how to live in right-relationship with individuals, different ethnic and economic groups, other societies and countries, and our environment. It is also about transforming those things that keep us from living in right-relationship. Peace-building is very much about transformation. As the United States bishops wrote in their 1983 pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace*, “Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus.”

Right-relationship: Right-relationships are relationships with others, God, self, and the world around us grounded in justice, in justice understood as fidelity to the responsibilities of our relationships. I would like to propose a way of thinking about relationships that is informed by the Religious Formation Conference (RFC)’s statement of the context for religious formation at the dawn of the 21st century—a statement which is essentially applicable to *all* of us as people of faith and, particularly, to all of us who are involved in ministry.

The RFC statement *Word Becoming Flesh* makes two main points: (1) “The relationship with God is central, and is the primary context for discipleship, ministry, and life as a Baptized person. We are grounded in a relationship with God at the center of our being [and] God beyond the horizon of our vision.” (2) Within our relationship with God reside five “indispensable relationships,” which are: (1) The relationship with our inner life (including our prayer life and the effects of our family-of-origin experiences); (2) our interpersonal relationships; (3) our institutional relationships, including with the Church; (4) our societal relationships; and (5) our relationship with and our place in the universe. We need to ask ourselves whether we are relating “rightly” at each of these five levels.

Transformation: Transformation is a process of change, of becoming configured in some new ways; it is a process of conversion. It is an active process—and

often not an easy or pleasant one. As we grow into living and ministering in right-relationship, i.e., into discipleship that is peace-building, we enter into transformation within those five levels of relationship and are ourselves transformed. Then we, in turn, become instruments of transformation.

SKILLS FOR TRANSFORMATION

As the Religious Formation Council document points out, we live in times of “extraordinary creativity and extraordinary chaos, where traditional expressions of relationships are shifting interiorly, interpersonally, institutionally, socially, universally.” There is now a particular urgency concerning social/cultural relationships. For example, the human rights movement has worked to make available to all persons and communities the opportunity for lives of dignity, freedom, peace, and security from oppression, and, in so doing, has actually helped focus the world community on priorities that are at the heart of the mission of the Gospel. Similarly, the ecological movement calls us to oneness with Earth itself, “a call that cannot be ignored” in the light of the need to live in right relationship with our brothers and sisters in every part of the world and to act on behalf of natural resources that are dramatically dwindling and compromised. The current context calls us urgently to be agents of transformation for our world.

Transformation of consciousness is key. It is essential for effective discipleship, for living in right-relationship, and for becoming instruments of conversion. Transformation of consciousness calls us to “migrate to the edge” and be bearers of Gospel values at the edge or margin. On the margin we have a very different perspective and a very different kind of potential for witnessing than is possible from the familiar and comfortable “center.” Transformation of consciousness is essential to our becoming bearers of hope.

Also essential for the transformation of consciousness is growth in awareness of the impact our choices and behaviors have on the realities of the wider world around us. For example, how does our insatiable consumption of market goods, e.g., clothing items mass-produced in sweatshops in El Salvador, Malaysia, or Mexico, affect the daily lives of the workers in those sweatshops? How does our lifestyle of very high energy-consumption (think of electricity for air-conditioning, or gasoline) make us an oil-dependent society? How does this determine our political, economic, and

Those of us who are serious about Gospel discipleship need to commit ourselves to broadening the perspective in which we situate ourselves, which determines our reading of events and circumstances, and from which we make decisions.

military policies? How do those policies, in turn, affect the lives of countless people around the world? How do they affect the environment? The kind of awareness that grows as we dare to sit with these questions leads gradually to a shift in our frames of reference so that we begin “reading” our behavior and our choices not just from the vantage point of our own convenience, comfort, pleasure, and even security, but also in terms of their inevitable impact on others about whom we seldom think. Those of us who are serious about Gospel discipleship need to commit ourselves to broadening the perspective in which we situate ourselves, which determines our reading of events and circumstances, and from which we make decisions.

Central to increasing our awareness (and thus central to a transformation of consciousness) is a willingness to see clearly. Especially in the United States, especially as Christians in the United States, as Gospel ministers in the United States, we have to be committed to working on our blindness, on the areas that theologian Jon Sobrino calls “culpable blindness,” which is not wanting to see reality as it truly is. In the privileged life circumstances most of us inhabit in this society, we can choose to see only the immediate reality that defines our own world. Spiritually, we cannot afford culpable blindness, because it leads us to see only a part of reality, or, worse, a false reality, a self-interested reality. This is a huge problem for us in our society. We cannot claim that we are Catholic, Gospel ministers without a willingness and an ability to see clearly, from a perspective much broader than one based solely on a United States vantage point. We must develop the courage to see our political, economic, social, and military policies from the perspective of the impact they have beyond our boundaries (and certainly also in terms of the impact they are having, increasingly, within our boundaries), if we want to be effective disciples of the Gospel.

Loving as Jesus loved is a coming-to-see process, in which we become conscious of the costs and realities of loving well.

We need to remember that the Gospel, Jesus, and discipleship are about seeing from the margins, not from the center. This is crucial, and definitely counter-cultural. It is especially important for us in the United States to get the perspective from the margins. A "willingness to see clearly" inevitably opens us to the discomfort of realizing our own contribution to current reality and to the implicit question of whether we will respond in a way that will bring reality into closer alignment with Gospel values. As aware, mature Christians we are called to take responsibility for determining whether the "reality" we are handed actually corresponds to reality, and then to speak about what we see. Loving as Jesus loved is a coming-to-see process, in which we become conscious of the costs and realities of loving well.

There are several skills, included in the RFC document, that are very important for the transformation of consciousness necessary for the future of our human community and our planet:

Learning to live simply, chastely, and obediently in relationship to the human community and the Earth.

Learning the skill of social analysis to be in a position to work for equitable access of the world's goods to all people and to the planet.

Listening contemplatively and letting ourselves be influenced by the wisdom of different cultures.

Learning to honor the wisdom of Earth and to reverence the cosmic community.

CREDIBLE DISCIPLESHIP

As people of faith, we are called to be counter-cultural in all areas of our life, by virtue of our Baptismal call to live simply, chastely, obediently, and, more so, by virtue of our commitment to ministry that reflects Gospel values. There is a gentle and challenging call to

each one of us to determine where our "center" is, and to ask whether our center truly is in a Gospel way of life. Not a gospel-according-to-consumer-culture-way-of-life, but rather a Gospel-according-to-Jesus-of-Nazareth-way-of-life. What is the center, the cornerstone, the focus of your life and ministry? To what *do* you give witness?

Only to the extent that we live and minister in a way that gives credibility to the Gospel, can we give credibility to the God whom we proclaim. As Donald Goergen, O.P., reminds us, Paul VI's beautiful exhortation on evangelization (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*) emphasized the witness of our life as an essential condition for real effectiveness in ministry. The central, poignant question he asks, and we need to ask is, "Do you *live* what you believe?" The follow-up question is, "To what *do* you, in fact, give witness?"

I would like to conclude this part of the article with a poem written by a Protestant Brazilian liberation writer, Rubem Alves.

What is hope?

It is a presentiment that imagination is more real and reality less real than it looks.

It is a hunch

that the overwhelming brutality of facts that oppress and repress is not the last word.

It is a suspicion

that reality is more complex than realism wants us to believe, and that the frontiers of the possible are not determined by the limits of the actual, and that in a miraculous and unexpected way life is preparing the creative events which will open the way to freedom and resurrection. The two, suffering and hope, live from each other. Suffering without hope produces resentment and despair. Hope without suffering creates illusions, naivete and drunkenness.

Let us plant dates

even though those who plant them never eat them. We must live by the love of what we will never see. This is the sacred discipline.

It is a refusal to let the creative act be dissolved in immediate sense experience, and a stubborn commitment to the future of our grandchildren.

*Such disciplined love
is what has given the prophets, revolutionaries and
saints
the courage to die for the future they envisaged.
They make their own bodies the seed of their highest
hope.*

(From *Tomorrow's Child*, quoted in an article by Goergen.)

REFLECTION

I now invite you, readers, to take twenty minutes to reflect quietly on the following two questions.

What *concrete step* can you take in your life so that you "see more clearly" and increase your awareness of reality from the perspective of the "margins"?

Can you identify one *concrete way* you can begin to transform your ministry (or life) so that it is more intentionally about peace-building (addressing and transforming *both* the immediate suffering and the causes of suffering)?

What was your experience of sitting with these questions for twenty minutes? The workshop participants voiced initial restlessness, some discomfort, and then growing awareness that started to become available to them in the silence and listening. Some encountered feelings of being overwhelmed by the world's reality, others felt unable to respond meaningfully alone; others described a sense of pain which gradually transformed into commitment and hope, others an unfolding sense of being on a long, quiet journey to make their contribution toward transforming the world around them, and still others a sense of creativity as they discovered specific actions they could take.

Some of the specific responses to the first question included praying the news; no longer bypassing challenging articles in Catholic (and other) publications, but allowing oneself to read them, to be made uncomfortable, and to listen to the challenges received; putting oneself, in small ways, in the shoes of individuals on the margins, and experiencing a little bit of their reality (for example, going without in some ways); gathering a group of women of different cultures, languages, religious backgrounds to drink coffee and discuss faith and politics with the hope of gaining a new breadth of perspective from a variety of vantage points.

Discussion around the second question raised some interesting points, including the frequent ques-

tion of whether we should be attending to the more immediate situations of need and suffering we encounter (giving food to the hungry on our doorstep) or trying to work on the larger system to promote shifts that would help alleviate the causes of that suffering (trying to transform the roots of hunger in society). We recalled that peace-building requires that we hold both the immediate and the structural pieces of the situation in our minds, and that it is not an either-or proposition. The call of Christian discipleship is to attend to both dimensions. Other participants shared a realization that, alone, they do not have all the resources to effect meaningful transformation, but that through collaboration, cooperation, and synergy of efforts changes can start to happen. Finally, some participants observed that reflecting on the question was stretching their mind beyond its usual categories of thinking about problems in the world, and inviting them to risk entering a new, open space for fashioning a meaningful response that would be consistent with Gospel discipleship.

I hope these reflections on discipleship as peace-building will encourage readers to explore ways they can become more intentionally committed to lives and ministry that promote the transformations necessary to move our world ever more into right-relationships at all levels.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

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REVISITING THE JOHARI WINDOW:

Improving Communications Through Self-disclosure and Feedback

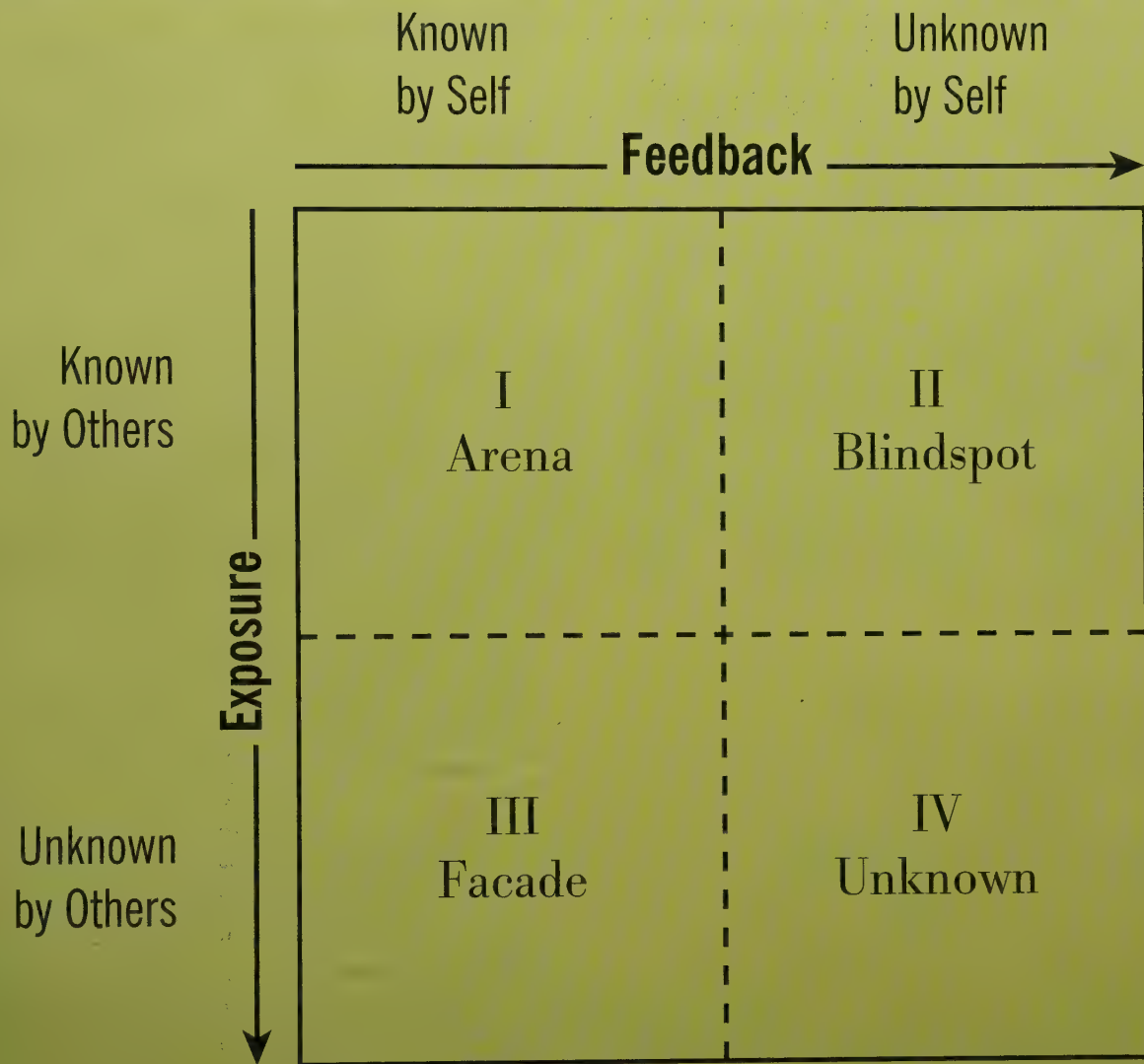
Terry R. Armstrong, Ph.D.



One of the most helpful tools for understanding interpersonal communications is the “Johari Window” created by Joseph Luff and Harry Ingram, a psychologist and psychiatrist, respectively, who specialized in interpersonal communications in the 1950s. They named their model the “Johari Window” after themselves. I have used the Johari model since the early 1970s to help clients who feel they are not being understood or are having difficulty communicating with others. In my profession, Organizational Development, most of my clients are organizations rather than individuals, but I have found the model helpful in one-on-one coaching, career planning for couples, group training, team-building sessions and training professional consultants. I have found it a very helpful communications aid when working with businesses, non-profits, government organizations and church leaders. I believe that readers of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT will find it helpful in their work.

The model utilizes self-disclosure and feedback. Good communication is the result of a good balance between self-disclosure and feedback. The model has been used by practitioners in most of the helping professions including: education, psychology, counseling, clinical pastoral education and social work.

Johari Window



THE MODEL

The “Johari” communication model says there are basically two things a person can do to improve communication: ask questions or tell information. This makes sense. The Johari window is then divided into four quadrants or panes.

Pane I is called the **open area** or **arena**

Pane II is labeled the **blind spot**

Pane III is considered the **facade**

Pane IV is classified as the **unknown**

Pane I

The **open area** is also often referred to as the **arena**

The lesson here: if you don't want to be blindsided, ask questions and take time to hear the other person out.

because in this area both parties know what is going on. When two parties see and understand how they are communicating, we say they communicate well.

Pane II

The **blind spot** is the area where surprises occur. The only way to decrease the area of the blind spot is to ask questions. Asking questions and listening to what others have to say can decrease the size of your blind spot.

Pane III

The **facade** is the area we hide from others. It is what we know but choose not to share. The only way another can know what we think or feel for sure is if we choose to tell them.

Pane IV

The **unknown** is that area of the relationship that neither party understands. At the personal level this is often known as the unconscious, but at the interpersonal level it is simply referred to as the unknown.

Let us now look at each of the windows to understand how they affect interpersonal communication.

THE BLIND SPOT

When the blind spot dominates the relationship, we are often surprised. Let me share a client's story to make the point of how the blind spot works and what you can do to decrease its area.

Once when visiting a client about a business problem, I learned he was having marital problems. "Sit down, Terry," he said closing his office door. "I've got something personal to tell you." "Must be important. I've never seen you close your door before." He looked glum sitting behind his large executive desk. "Joyce left?" I asked, sensing the worst. "Yes. I was totally surprised. I thought we had a wonderful marriage. I tell her everything." The muscular 230-pound man was

crying. "I just don't understand what happened."

The client had been completely blindsided. What I now know, but did not know then, was that he did not ask many questions. He had always told his wife everything and **assumed** she did the same. He never questioned. He seldom asked.

Now when I share this story at workshops there are always a few misty eyes. There are always a few who have been blindsided in personal or professional relationships. They too thought they were communicating because they kept nothing secret from their spouse or employees but failed to ask enough questions.

The lesson here: if you don't want to be blindsided, ask questions and take time to hear the other person out. Sometimes it takes a while before the other can formulate an adequate answer. Ask the question and wait until the other can answer. It can save you from a horrendous surprise. If my client had asked questions and listened to his wife's answers rather than just told her about his dreams, plans and what was going on in his life he would not have been blindsided. By not asking her questions he never learned what was important to her. By taking actions without asking about her needs and concerns he was blindsided when his wife left him.

THE FACADE

When the **facade** dominates our relationships, people see us as untrustworthy and political. This is not surprising if we realize that when we ask lots of questions, but do not share much about ourselves, others begin wondering what we are up to. Not knowing our motives, they will question them. Suspicion will begin to dominate. Let me share another story taken from my consulting practice.

I had a client who was the president of a multi-million dollar organization. He called me in to work with him because he was having difficulty getting the organization's members to accept a restructuring plan. "I just don't understand," he said. "I've done it by the book." "What do you mean?" "Well, I have included all the stakeholders. I've met with most of the employees and asked for their advice, and I've included all their ideas in the change process. But now it has become one big political mess. People are fighting the restructuring throughout the organization. It's like I never included them in the process." "It does sound strange. How about I interview some of your employees and see if I can figure out what's going on?"

He agreed more out of frustration than anything else. After interviewing a couple dozen of the employees, I was surprised by how distrustful they were. Again and again I heard comments like: "I have no idea why he is doing this." "Who does he think he is trying to fool?" "I wouldn't trust that son-of-a-bitch as far as I can throw him." "He never shares anything with us."

This was a classical case of asking but not telling. I simply told the client that his employees had no idea what his goals were and that they were highly suspicious of his motives. Then I shared the model of the "Johari Window" with him. The client got the idea and prepared a twenty-page report backed up by market studies, financial reports and tons of statistics. Thus he explained why the change was necessary, how he had gotten input from employees, and how he had laid out a possible restructuring scenario for the company using their input. He sent the report to all the employees and asked that anyone who had questions come and see him, call, or e-mail. The plan was briefly discussed and quickly accepted by everyone. He thought he had done enough by asking for their input. What he had failed to do was tell.

THE UNKNOWN

When the **unknown** dominates the relationship, neither party knows what is going on. It is pure confusion. With couples, sometimes this situation leads to fighting; at other times, to painful silence. I once had a client who was at a total stalemate with his business partner of twenty-two years. I interviewed both of them and it was clear that neither knew what the other expected out of the partnership. Though they were both miserable in the current relationship and their company stock was in a massive downside, they could not carry on a conversation without getting into a serious argument that led to nothing but frustration. Because neither party understood what was going on in the relationship I introduced them to a psychotherapist who helped them work through the many issues that had built up over years of poor communication.

THE ARENA

When the **arena** or **open area** is dominant, communication flows freely. An 80% open Johari Window isn't perfect, but it certainly provides the basis for good communication. It is an ideal we should try to achieve.

ISN'T GOOD COMMUNICATION MORE THAN THIS?

Certainly there is more to good communication than telling and asking. How we share and question also makes a difference. We all know people who can ask questions the way a thoughtful spiritual director would and others who seem like a police interrogator. There are those who can tell us difficult things in caring ways and others who put us off. Perfecting your asking and telling skills takes practice and feedback. You can check on yourself often by drawing a picture of what you think your Johari Window looks like, to yourself and to others. You can then reflect on it or get structured feedback through instruments like those provided by Teleometrics International at <http://www.teleometrics.com>. We also need regularly to work on ways to improve how we ask and tell. The model has paid off for me professionally as well as in my personal life. I suggest you try to open up your Johari Windows with significant others, at work, at home and in your communities.

When my clients can not afford the instruments, I just have them draw their Johari Windows to help them discover how aware they are and provide them with some practice time in using the model.

FOR PRACTICE

Think of someone with whom you have a communications problem, and fill in the window frames on the following page. You can make a Johari for yourself and the other. Try to be as accurate and honest as you can.

How might you be able to open up your window in order to improve communication?

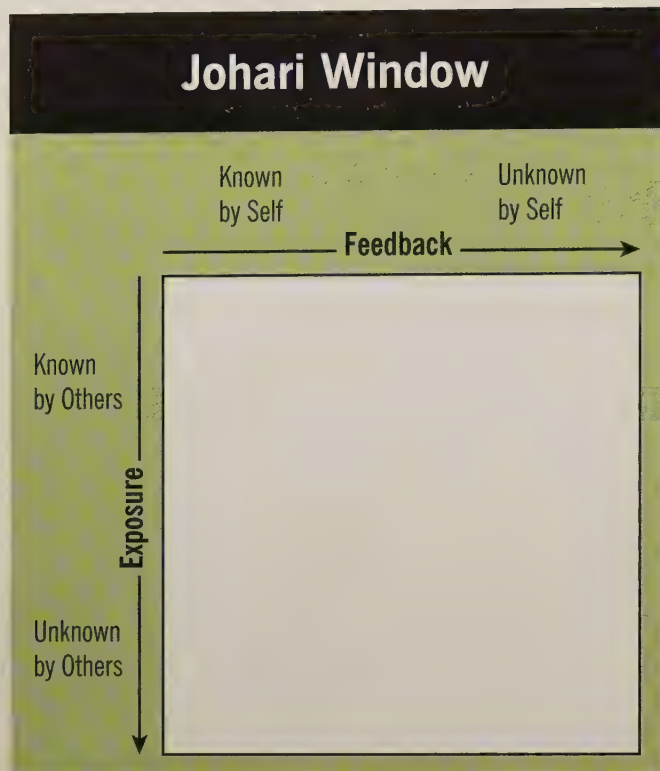
How might you use the Johari window with the other?

Do you feel you need professional help, or is understanding the model enough?

What kind of help does the other need to open his or her window?

During communication workshops I often find that the participants' windows are not very open. I give the participants some help during the workshop, but if this does not seem to be adequate, I advise them to get professional help when they return home. For some, just seeing the model is helpful. Others need to discuss ways to improve their communication. But there are some who, for whatever reason, need professional help when they return home. If you feel you or your clients

Johari Window



need help, please get it or help your clients find the kind of help they need. There are few skills more important than effective communication. Careers are important, marriages and families are important, as are the relationships in religious communities. Many of the

problems we find in our critical relationships boil down to ineffective communications. We all know that in some cases there are deep psychological or political problems that need to be addressed. However, I have found that many problems arise simply because people do not know how to communicate effectively.

This well-used model does not seem to get old. Do not hesitate to use it because you feel your clients are already aware of it or it seems too simple. As with the "Spiritual Exercises," the Johari Window can be a very powerful tool.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Luff, J. *Group Process: An Introduction to Group Dynamics*. San Francisco State University: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1984.

Teleometrics International has a number of psychometric instruments that relate directly to using the Johari Window for improving communications between individuals and groups: <http://www.teleometrics.com>.



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INTUITION CAN BE HURTFUL

Intuition seems to be central to our thinking processes. But we need to be careful to test out some of our intuitions. Most employers, for example, prefer to have interviews with prospective employees rather than to trust in more objective measures such as level of education and test scores. But the evidence of research is that the objective measures beat the personal interview hands down, according to Robyn Dawes, Ph.D., a psychologist at Carnegie Mellon University. According to Richard Nisbett, Ph.D., of the University of Michigan, no unstructured interview for any kind of position—graduate school, medical school, the military or professional jobs—has anything but a low validity for predicting the interviewee's future performance. But we cannot contain it. You meet someone and the feeling that you know who that person is after talking to them is just overwhelming. People also tend to believe that those close to them can intuit their feelings and hidden hints more than strangers can. But a study of married couples showed that this was not the case. Strangers did as well as spouses in interpreting hints, jokes, etc. Such a presumption of intuition on the part of a partner can cause problems of communication in a marriage. It might be well to check out our presumptions about our own or others' intuition. Reported in *Monitor on Psychology*, March, 2005, pp. 58-60.

Living with Discernment in Times of Transition

Joel Giallanza, C.S.C.

My own life is in a different space since I was first invited to offer these reflections. I am originally from New Orleans; Hurricanes Katrina and Rita happened, and the levees broke. While my siblings and I, and their families, have not lived in Louisiana for several years, most of our relatives do; they were and are affected by the extensive devastation left in the wake of those hurricanes. As we listen, their continuing stories are of transition because of losses already experienced and possibly some yet to be discovered. Nothing behind them will be the same and their expectations about how the future will unfold have been altered dramatically. Their perspective on almost every aspect of life has needed some adjustment just so they can comprehend what has transpired.

Not every period of transition will be as painful, life-changing and long-range as that experienced by my relatives and by so many others in that region of the country; nevertheless, our spiritual journey does not always guide us along smoothly paved and well-lighted pathways. Occasionally our experiences can lead us to wonder if we are on the road at all, if we are indeed moving in the direction of responding to and doing God's will. This is especially true when times of transition blur our vision of the road ahead and make the paths behind us so impassible that a return trip cannot be considered. We always bear the responsibility of knowing God's will, even



God's will is not inaccessible. It is revealed clearly through the life, teaching, and example of Jesus of Nazareth.

in moments of transition. Such knowledge is no guarantee that our spiritual pathways will be paved and lighted, but it could give us a refreshed confidence and conviction for continuing the journey.

God's will is not inaccessible. It is revealed clearly through the life, teaching, and example of Jesus of Nazareth and through others whose lives inspire and encourage us by their consistency with and fidelity to that teaching and example. However, from time to time in our life, instances emerge in which God's will is not so clear, at least its exact application is not evident. At such times we sense the need to search more intently for what God is asking of us; traditionally, that search is referred to as discernment.

By etymology, discernment means "to separate apart," to distinguish something from everything around it so it can be perceived clearly. This is the challenge. Given our many tasks and responsibilities, with their flurry of activities, we need to "separate apart" God's will precisely so it can be recognized and implemented. What is necessary to do this? That we must desire to know God's will may be obvious, but the process for nurturing that desire and coming to that knowledge may not be so apparent.

These reflections will identify some principles of discernment by examining one experience of a familiar biblical character, Samuel. The specific experience is his identification and anointing of the shepherd-boy David to be the future king of Israel. Commentaries on this story in chapter sixteen of the First Book of Samuel often focus on David and the significance of his selection as successor to King Saul. However, when read with the spotlight on Samuel's experience of his own commission and task, the story reveals some basic truths about discernment. Samuel has to deal with a period of significant transition.

The immediate context of David's selection to be king is Saul's disobedience in following God's commands. Because the Amalekites were among those who had persecuted the people of Israel after their departure from Egypt, God had ordered King Saul to "utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them" (1 Samuel 15:3). Saul, rather, spares their king and takes "the best of the sheep and the cattle and the lambs, and all that was valuable" (15:9). God then tells Samuel, "I regret that I made Saul king, for he has turned from following me, and has not carried out my commands" (15:10). Samuel confronts King Saul with God's word and in fact completes the original command himself by killing King Agag of the Amalekites. Even with all this, "Samuel grieved over Saul" (15:35).

Chapter sixteen then opens with the following story. The verse numbers are indicated for convenient reference.

(1) Yahweh said to Samuel, "How much longer do you mean to go on mourning over Saul, now that I myself have rejected him as ruler of Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have found myself a king from among his sons."

(2) Samuel replied, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it he will kill me." Yahweh then said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh.'

(3) Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I myself will tell you what to do; you will anoint for me the one I indicate to you."

(4) Samuel did what Yahweh ordered and went to Bethlehem. The elders of the town came trembling to meet him and asked, "Seer, is your coming favorable for us?"

(5) "Yes," he replied. "I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." He purified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

(6) When they arrived, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely this must be Yahweh's anointed now before him."

(7) But Yahweh said to Samuel, "Take no notice of his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him; God does not see as human beings see; they look at appearances but Yahweh looks at the heart."

(8) Jesse then called Abinadab and presented him to Samuel, who said, "Yahweh has not chosen this one either."

(9) Jesse then presented Shammah, but Samuel said, "Yahweh has not chosen this one either."

(10) Jesse thus presented seven of his sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "Yahweh has not chosen any of these."

(11) He then asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse replied, "There is still one left, the youngest; he is looking after the sheep." Samuel then said to Jesse, "Send for him, for we shall not sit down to eat until he arrives."

(12) Jesse had him sent for; he had ruddy cheeks, with fine eyes and an attractive appearance. Yahweh said, "Get up and anoint him: he is the one!"

(13) At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him, surrounded by his brothers; and the spirit of Yahweh rushed upon David from that day onwards. Samuel, for his part, set off and went to Ramah.

DISCERNMENT

The story of this discernment opens with Samuel bawling in grief because God has rejected Saul. Samuel appears dysfunctional, not doing much of anything other than brooding. On the one hand, he was angry at Saul because of Saul's blatant disobedience; he expected more of the king. On the other hand, he cannot imagine Saul other than as God's anointed one. Now that Saul has been rejected, now that life as Samuel had known it was changed, what would become of Israel?

We can know and feel the distress of significant life changes even when our experiences are not as dramatic as Samuel's. It is uncomfortable and disconcerting when something familiar and unchangeable (at least from our perspective) is no longer a stable and regular part of our everyday life and experience. Like Samuel, we too may "go on mourning" over what is no longer the reality, over what cannot be. We can slip into a type of dysfunction in which there is little if any forward movement evident in our life. At this point we need to explore what is happening in our journey and discern what needs to be done so we can continue on our way.

God commissions Samuel to go to Bethlehem to anoint a new king. Not surprisingly, Samuel questions the wisdom of this because of the obvious political risk

God may communicate to us through friends, loved ones, or a spiritual director, that we have been stalled and now must continue the journey.

involved. He informs God that Saul, rejected or not, certainly would kill anyone who would dare to threaten his possession of the throne. God then gives Samuel a political-religious cover: go to Bethlehem equipped to offer sacrifice; that will not raise any suspicions. Finally, God further specifies Samuel's mission: invite Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice; what is to be done and whom to anoint will be indicated.

Though we may not be so formally commissioned, God may communicate to us through friends, loved ones, or a spiritual director, that we have been stalled and now must continue the journey. We may even have a sense of what is to be done. And, we may question and protest all this since we know it will take us only deeper into the unfamiliar and the uncomfortable. Still, it is often precisely through the suggestions and encouragement and support of those who know us well that we discover a way to move beyond our questions and protests so that we can do what needs to be done. The challenge is to be willing to listen, to trust and to try. So Samuel goes to Bethlehem and, of course, his arrival causes a stir. However, he says and does just as God had instructed him and his entrance into the city goes smoothly.

When we take those first tentative steps into unfamiliar territory during a discernment, not all may go as smoothly as suggested by those who encouraged us. The temptation, then, is to pronounce a resounding "I told you so" and retreat to our earlier immobility. Our willingness must go beyond those first steps. It must include the decision not to turn back even when contending with contradictory desires. There can never be a firm guarantee that everything will go smoothly; but as we go forward, we will be acting with faith and trust, and with the confidence built upon them.

Jesse and his sons arrive. Samuel looks and immediately assumes that the first-born son, Eliab, is the

Maintaining a sense of hope does not pretend away our feelings in the face of what looks to be an impasse.

chosen one. This is not an inappropriate assumption. Samuel's relatively smooth entrance into the city dispelled his initial trepidation, refreshing his confidence and self-assurance concerning his capabilities for this mission. Further, he knows it is customary that the blessing, the inheritance, the favored choice are bestowed upon the first-born son. Eliab's bearing supports Samuel's assumption.

Our willingness to listen and trust and try as we continue our journey can make us confident and self-assured as we approach the principal task of our discernment. There is, however, a shadow side to this. Confidence and self-assurance, though solid gifts that contrast sharply with our previous hesitation, can generate a false sense of certainty within us. While it is not accurate to describe this as arrogance, it can make us somewhat rash in our assessment of and response to possible means for completing that principal task. The hazard in this is impatience, which tends to determine God's will, not discern it. What is before us can appear so obvious, so correct, that we simply decide what is to be done without asking further questions, without listening for additional information. And, with the decision, we assume that we have discerned and done God's will.

God's response to Samuel's assumption articulates a fundamental principle distinguishing the means of interpretation used by humanity and those used by God. Using the senses as primary channels for receiving information, humanity interprets and judges and decides on the basis of externals. By contrast, God looks to the heart of the person without regard for distinctions based on appearances or other externals.

This is an essential principle of discernment. To equate the data received through observation with an accomplished discernment is to ignore the deeper exploration and examination necessary for making a

truly discerned decision. Observation, in itself, is insufficient. It does not probe intensely enough since it limits us to the information we have gathered from the immediately perceptible. Such information is valuable; but it is a beginning, a first point to examine. It cannot be designated as a definite indication of God's will, for God "looks at the heart." That is, God sees and understands our identity, even as we pray in the words of Psalm 139:

Lord, you search me and know me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my deepest thoughts from far away. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? For it was you who created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. (1-2, 7, 13).

Similarly, we must search beyond surface appearances to discover the identity, the heart, the true nature, of the situation we are interpreting.

Samuel must have assimilated God's teaching on looking at and approaching this task from a new perspective. He is no longer so impulsive about summing up the situation; he has become more attentive to God's way of discerning and deciding. However, by the end of verse 10 we begin to wonder what Samuel will do next. He has done exactly as God had instructed him, and nothing has come of it. The seven sons have been presented and God did not make a choice from among them for anointing. Samuel himself may have wondered what to do next.

As we continue along the pathways of our discernment and strive to look beyond appearances, to ask and probe for whatever information we believe will assist us, it is unsettling when we are confronted with an apparent dead-end. This is especially true when we have made the efforts to move beyond our initial hesitations and superficialities and are, in fact, making some progress. It is very important at such junctures to maintain a sense of hope, of willingness to continue. The temptation will be to succumb to discouragement, to accept the perspective that the process has been a waste of the time and energy expended thus far. Maintaining a sense of hope does not pretend away our feelings in the face of what looks to be an impasse. Rather, it is a challenge to consider the possibility that not every option has been identified, not every question has been asked. At least we must ponder that possibility before summarily deciding to discontinue the journey of discernment.

Rather than immediately assuming there are no alternatives remaining, Samuel asks Jesse the most simple and logical of questions given the situation: "Are these all the sons you have?" It is a particularly interesting question at this point, even somewhat unexpected. Samuel could have assumed logically, that, in presenting these seven, Jesse had introduced all his sons. Realizing that logic had failed him before, when assessing Eliab, Samuel explores the "illogical" and discovers that there is indeed an eighth son. This discovery is so significant that Samuel delays any further activity until this youngest son has arrived.

As we consider other options and formulate additional questions, we may find it helpful to ask for assistance from our spiritual director or someone in whom we usually confide. Such assistance gives us another perspective; it can provide the impetus we need to reexamine a possibility we had dismissed previously as "illogical." Asking for this assistance requires the self-knowledge that recognizes the need for resources beyond the self, and the humility that actively seeks the support of those resources. If we remain stubbornly self-contained, then we completely compromise the authenticity and accuracy of our discernment.

Given the glowing description of David as he enters the scene, it could be expected that Samuel would jump to a quick conclusion as he had done regarding Eliab. But prudence prevails, Samuel does and says nothing. He waits and listens. Then God speaks; God commands the anointing; God indicates the person. For this son, the one who was overlooked almost completely, is the chosen one. Samuel acts, and the Spirit of God moves definitively upon David. His work now completed, Samuel journeys to his home in Ramah.

The indication and verification of God's will for us within our discernment may be much more subtle than it was for Samuel when he is told of David, "he is the one!" Nowhere along the pathways of discernment will we find the sure promise that our discovery of God's will is certain to be indisputably evident. For as Saint Paul teaches us, "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Nevertheless, we will come to a point in our discernment where we believe and trust that we do have all the data necessary or sufficient for a decision based on truth and wisdom. And very often, that belief and trust are affirmed and confirmed by our spiritual director and others with whom we shared the process of our discernment. Then we "set off" to continue our life's journey with the insight and grace and

If we remain stubbornly self-contained, then we completely compromise the authenticity and accuracy of our discernment.

growth with which God has blessed us through that discernment.

A REFLECTION

As with many biblical stories, this one of Samuel's journey to Bethlehem for identifying and anointing the future king of Israel lends itself to a multi-faceted meditation. However, for the purpose of these reflections, the story will be considered from the perspective of two principles that emerge from it.

The first principle centers on the participants within a discernment. Often there is a tendency to regard, and so approach, discernment as an activity of the first person singular. *I* am in a process of discerning God's will for *me*. On the surface, this is not incorrect since we must be involved personally in identifying God's will for us. But, without additional qualifiers, this statement sounds isolationist, implying a mode of operation in which discernment is a personal and private quest with no reference to external resources for support and counsel. Samuel's story teaches us to broaden the quest so that discernment is not limited to the boundaries of the self.

Samuel's discernment obviously includes himself. In fact, initially, he tends to act on his own, rapidly assuming that Eliab is the chosen one (16:6). Here Samuel functions as if he has completely forgotten the instructions he had received earlier (16:3). Even though a bit impetuous, Samuel is an active participant in this discernment. His self-reliance, however, must be balanced by a lesson from God (16:7).

Then Samuel's discernment includes God. The lesson teaches him God's way of interpretation, challenging him to look beyond what is perceived by appearances. Thus, Samuel's estimation of the remaining sons

We believe through hope,
we believe without seeing.

who are present (16:8-10) reflects a confidence based on what God has taught him. Nevertheless, that estimation results in an apparent dearth of available options. Only Jesse can provide the information Samuel needs.

Then Samuel's discernment includes yet another person. Apart from Jesse and the crucial information he provides, Samuel might have concluded that his work was completed and that God must have been mistaken about finding the future king among Jesse's sons. However, Samuel has learned to use all available resources for discerning God's will.

The first principle to be drawn from this is that discernment, while personal, is not private. In this journey we are seeking to know God's will for us as individuals, but our search is not completely solitary. God's will is mediated; therefore, we must be attentive to whatever and whomever could offer to us further insight for knowing and understanding that will. There are, then, at least three participants in a true discernment: the individual, God, and companion(s). The "companion" may be a spiritual director, a confidant, or more than one person accompanying us on the journey.

Without all the participants, the integrity of discernment is compromised. If we exclude God and those who can assist us, then discernment degenerates into little more than presumption and self-righteousness; an activity of "me alone." If we exclude our companions, thus approaching discernment as "God and me," then we move toward a fundamentalism that does not acknowledge the need for some means of critiquing the authenticity of our interpretations, the wisdom of our decisions, and the realism of our plans to implement them. This inclusion of others is often the forgotten or neglected component in discernment, at least in the beginning. In both these cases—"me alone" and

"God and me"—genuine discernment is jeopardized.

The second principle that emerges from Samuel's story concerns the period of time necessary for discernment. Though a definite time period cannot be established for application in every instance, discernment does have a beginning and an end. Very often, discernment is described as a process, emphasizing that it is a progression to be followed, not a prescription to be filled. However, this process is incarnational insofar as we are seeking God's will for us in a particular context regarding a distinct situation or issue. The implicit goal is to complete the search as effectively as possible to benefit our spiritual growth and quality of life. To extend the process indefinitely, approaching it with no reference to some end point, is merely deferment not discernment.

Without doubt, there are times when additional information is necessary before a decision can be made. In fact, to varying degrees, additional information will always be necessary. But even here we must distinguish between essential information and that which, though helpful, remains peripheral. We must be willing to make preliminary decisions regarding the sufficiency of material at our disposal for this particular discernment. We must be willing to arrive at a point where we actually decide, where we accept what we have discovered as God's will for us.

Discernment is a journey in faith not an experiment in scientific analysis. As the Letter to the Hebrews tells us, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (11:1). We hope to know God's will, and yet we do not see it for lack of certainty. It is precisely in response to this reality that the power of our faith gives substance and evidence. We believe through hope, we believe without seeing. To delay the conclusion of our discernment on the grounds that we must have absolute certainty before proceeding is to render our faith useless. In truth, we will contradict any claim that we have faith. If we cannot make this journey with the light of faith, then in effect we journey with no light at all.

There are surely other principles that touch the nature and practice of discernment. Our formulation of the questions to be used as the discernment unfolds will determine its quality and progress. The role of our spiritual director and of other companions on the journey will affect our interpretations of the information we receive. The resources we choose will influence our perspectives. Our mode of prayer may need adjustment

and adaptation during the discernment. Any exploration of these principles lies beyond the scope of these reflections. The two principles highlighted here, though, are particularly important for avoiding the common pitfalls of isolation and procrastination.

"I MYSELF WILL TELL YOU WHAT TO DO"

Times of transition, in any dimension of life, can give us a sense that we have no definite direction and no durable roots; we may question the value of our future and the veracity of our past. Such times can shake the basic supports that help to shape our identity. Discernment is necessary through transition times precisely so that our response to what we are experiencing is neither precipitous nor postponed. Discernment is a journey in faith. A fundamental challenge within the faith needed for this journey is precisely our acceptance of God's promise to Samuel: "I myself will tell you what to do." Do we believe this for our own lives? Do we believe that God's will is accessible, that it will be revealed? The alternative is to characterize God's will as so mysterious and distant that we relegate it to the category of the completely incomprehensible. Without doubt, we must do our part, we must make up the journey of discernment, we must look and listen and seek to discover. We must accept that the journey is possible, and we must desire to know and do God's will.

The very first biblical stories in which we meet the prophet Samuel provide glimpses of his early life as a minister in the temple under Eli's guidance. One story

A fundamental challenge within the faith needed for this journey is precisely our acceptance of God's promise to Samuel: "I myself will tell you what to do."

relates Samuel's first recognition of and encounter with God, an event for which he was coached by Eli. Upon hearing the voice, Samuel's learned response is simple and direct: "Speak, Lord; your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). Thus begins Samuel's relationship with God; and after that, "Samuel grew up and Yahweh was with him" (3:19). We must learn this same response, not for a moment in life, but throughout life for all our experiences in life. Then we, too, will grow toward union with God, discerning and doing God's will.



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A TIP FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO QUIT SMOKING

If you want to quit smoking, stay away from bars or other environments that have been associated with your smoking behavior. Cynthia Conklin, Ph.D., psychologist at the University of Pittsburgh's Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, has done research using pictures of environments commonly associated with smoking. When she shows these pictures to former smokers, even when no ashtrays or other smoking-related objects are apparent, they experience intense cravings. When they view pictures not related to smoking, they do not have such cravings. The craving effects are increased if the pictures are of environments actually used by the smokers when they were smoking. Conklin's research is reported in the February, 2006 issue of *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*. (Source: *Monitor on Psychology* March, 2006, p. 15.)

The Quality of *Mercy*



Kathy Coffey

One word sings across the centuries, a word for which the human heart longs: *mercy*. God's care is cupped in human hands, etched in the lines of human lives. The community of merciful people crisscrosses time, united by a hand outstretched, a strength as firm as cedar yet lithe enough to lean through the years and touch us.

This community surpasses the cozy zone of intimate friends. This circle gives more than comfort. It brings an empowering sense that we can change this world together, one small bit at a time.

WHAT IS MERCY?

The quality of mercy is not strained. Neither is it easily defined. Perhaps an understanding comes through the sketched line of a shoulder, bending in empathy. Perhaps appreciation is shaped by story:

Once a girl named Catherine McAuley walked out the door of a Dublin home. She saw misery in its slums and intervened. This servant or that orphan needed shelter. Mercy prompted her to see with sympathetic eyes and act with generous heart.

Another, young Katharine (Drexel), saw the open sores of Native Americans. Her heart went out to them—as did her fortune.

What propelled her? We name it mercy.

Nothing we can say of this virtue will ever be complete. Ultimately it cannot be pinned down because it must live on in the efforts of human beings today. A visual image for that continuing work appears at Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago, where statues of saints surround the perimeter. Near St. Brigid and her cow stands an empty niche, reserved for anyone people imagine there. It may be someone they revere; on better days it may be themselves.

Why study the ancestral history of the merciful? Our culture cheers the merciless, whose knife blade flashes swift and sharp. Harsh headlines scream, "No Mercy." Heroes obsessed with being "cool" deny the mercy we desire. Learning the ways of the large-hearted seems counter-cultural, slightly subversive. Yet who contributed more to human happiness: the tyrants who slaughtered or the nurses who saved lives?

There's nothing like a merciful person to put anxiety into perspective. "It's about more than you, darling," he or she whispers sweetly to those trapped in narrowness or self-pity. In "The Mercy of God," poet Jessica Powers described this setting-aside-of-self to enter mercy:

I rose up from the acres of self that I tended
with passion
and defended with flurries of pride;
I walked out of myself and went into the woods
of God's mercy,
and here I abide.

No one visits the National Gallery of Art to find beauty solely within its walls. People visiting art museums become sensitized to beauty there, then find it everywhere. So too, students of mercy seek it everywhere. That lovely quality emerges in the people they encounter, the chances they have to give and receive mercy.

All the deeds of mercy added together might give the merest glimpse into the ocean of God's mercy. A phrase from Thomas Merton captures the infinite echo: "Mercy within mercy within mercy."

THE PATTERN OF A PARABLE

It is said that one short-cut to truth is a story. A parable in Luke's gospel describes the work of mercy. Merciful people are like God, and in a lovely circle, God is like a woman who loses her coin, lights her lamp, sweeps her house, finds it and celebrates. We can

God is "mercy within mercy within mercy."

interpret the coin as a person, lost in the wreckage of war or tossed aside by the Industrial Age. Then we can see the parallel between the woman Jesus describes and people of mercy.

"Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not

- **light** a lamp and
- **sweep** the house, **searching** carefully until she finds it?
- And when she does **find** it,
- she calls together her friends and neighbors

and says to them, '**Rejoice** with me because I have found the coin that was lost.'" (Luke 15:8-10).

Let's look at each action. The woman who lost the coin **lights** the lamp because she needs keen vision in a dark house. Mercy must reach into the shadowy corners and deep canyons of human evil. She acts like Jesus, who sought the lost sheep, representing the most marginalized people of his society. She identified so strongly with Jesus that Catherine of Siena imagined God telling her, "you are another myself."

The inner life fuels the external action. Jesus promised "you shall do greater things than I," and she takes his promise seriously. Because of this solidarity, the woman who lost the coin can act like God's daughter, filled with grace and strength, rising to impossible challenges. That's why Thea Bowman could persuade the American bishops to link arms and sing "We Shall Overcome" or Katharine Drexel could educate the Native Americans and African-Americans whom everyone else ignored.

"Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!" wrote the prophet Isaiah (2:5). Catherine of Siena echoed: "What a marvelous thing that even while we are in the dark we should know the light."

The woman who lost the coin **sweeps** the house,

energetically clearing the clutter. She doesn't simply forget the coin, vaguely hoping it might emerge the next day. She grabs the broom because she's upset and angry, convinced that the coin (or the person) is precious. An earthy vein of practicality runs through the parable and through the lives of merciful people. They don't simply organize committees or speculate about the problem—they *do* something.

They move briskly from religion-as-reassurance to faith-as-imperative to transform the world. They operate out of "the conviction that despite all evidence to the contrary, God's spirit of mercy is at work in our world and in our lives, empowering us to be ministers of compassion and healing" (Denise Levertov, "The Showings: Lady Julian of Norwich," *New Directions* 50. New York: New Directions Publishing, 1986).

What role does righteous anger play in the works of mercy? Surely it galvanizes some to action. The merciful make positive use of anger's energy, not wallowing in tragic injustice. Instead of getting depressed, they tackle the systems that cause the suffering. So Frances Cabrini became a legend with the produce dealers of Denargo Market in Denver. She *told* them (never begging) what to load on her truck to feed her orphans. Not just the leftovers or the produce-bordering-on-rot. Nope, the good stuff.

In the parable, the woman who lost the coin **searches** carefully, matching the need of a particular moment with her particular talent. She finds the task that most needs attention, and concentrates on it. So Jesus sought out those who most needed his care and healed them. So Mother Teresa and her sisters combed the streets of Calcutta, seeking the dying or abandoned.

How lovely and important that the woman **finds** the coin. The story doesn't end sadly because in one sense we are already found. The merciful draw on a deep pool of forgiveness, saying, "welcome home no matter what you did," offering everyone the enormous relief of being OK exactly "as is," with no spruce-up improvements required.

People of mercy know that their work is a participation in God's work. God, the source of all mercy, leads them to their work, empowers them to do it and energizes them for the long haul. Their response to suffering humanity is nothing short of magnificent.

Finally the woman who lost—and found—the coin **rejoices** with her friends and neighbors. This theme of rejoicing recurs often. The work itself can be a joy. The merciful feel honored to be doing it. When they

encounter tragedy, sadness and failure, they return to the wellsprings of joy. "There's a time for fasting and a time for partridges," Teresa of Avila declared. As she dug into the feast, she chortled: "This is the time for partridges!" In case anyone missed the point, she added, "From silly devotions and sour-faced saints, good Lord deliver us!"

Weakened by cancer, Thea Bowman kept singing spirituals. On Saturday afternoons, Dorothy Day listened faithfully to the Metropolitan Opera radio broadcast. Desperately poor, Elizabeth Ann Seton wheedled elegant ball gowns from her friends for her daughter Kit. Without the joyous interludes, the work of mercy might become drudgery, a pallid shroud beside the vibrant colors it should wear.

What then does the parable teach us of mercy? Opening the 2004 Los Angeles Religious Education Congress, "Steeped in Mercy, Balm for the World," Sister Edith Prendergast described the parable's vision of mercy as a "rescue mission." It "reaches into the dark corners, the cracks of our flailing and our faltering. Mercy seeps into that space, picks us up, holds us, and enfolds us in love until we are restored, made whole again." Then we celebrate the restoration; we "taste the cream and quintessence of God's mercies."

The elements of the lost coin story parallel similar ones in the parable that follows: the prodigal son. Luke 15:11-32 has the same elements of loss; search (the father goes out of his house to both sons); the practicality of rings, sandals and fatted calves; and celebration. Both parables evoke the image of God's lost, beloved child, defeated by poverty, ravaged by disease, or weary from too long a time away from home. As in the Beatitudes, Jesus looks beyond the scruffy appearance of the lost child and sees the inner person, the deeper blessing. Like Father, like Son. Now it's up to us to go and do likewise.



This article is based on *Women of Mercy* by Kathy Coffey.

The Very Rich Hours

James Torrens, S.J.

THE VERY RICH HOURS

This is my book of hours
that I've been lettering
since the October kalends
when I was lettered in red.

Born under the balance sign,
my illustration of choice:
reddening grape leaves
with a novice picker.

The little hours of the Virgin
lend some needed luster
to the blackest hours
of the history I live through.

By sunlight, by candlelight,
what impels me to utterance
is the color wheel of psalms,
from querulous to trustful.

On a vivid but somber page,
I image myself under the cross.
In the deathbed scene, an angel's
fighting the devil for my soul.

The most exquisite prayer books of our Catholic past are undoubtedly those produced in the Middle Ages and known as books of hours. Starting around 1250, lovely French painting was done in miniature and on commission for these hand-lettered books of devotion. Certain artists are known by name, in particular Jean Fouquet, but others are called simply the Master of this or that much admired book. The most opulent of them were called "*les tres riches heures*." The owners, either nobility or of the merchant class, held in their hands some extremely beautiful aids to meditation.

After the invention of printing in the mid-fifteenth century, thousands of books of hours appeared, in hundreds of editions. They were often the only book a literate person owned. Their great value lay in giving a layman or laywoman access to God, Mary and the saints in a more direct way than the Church's liturgy seemed to give.

The three centuries of the books of hours have been displayed and explained by a traveling exhibition from the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, called "Painted Prayers." It spent the final months of 2005 at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and these reflections derive from that visit. The exhibit, with its explanatory text, made me think how an entire life could be reflected in such a prayer book and nourished by it.

The book of hours, as such, took as its core the Little Hours of the Virgin Mary, which were modeled on the Divine Office as chanted or recited by monks and clergy. Both the Office and the Little Hours in those days consisted of psalms, with hymns and readings, for eight times of the day. The prayers went from pre-dawn Matins to Compline at bedtime.

Devotion to Our Lady, stirred by Saint Bernard and embodied in so many of the great cathedrals, tended to dominate a book of hours. However, it managed to cram in a lot more. Each book of hours started off with calendar pages of the feast days for each month. Big feasts were singled out by red lettering ("red-letter days"!). Every month had its little illustration appropriate for the season. The contents of the book included, besides the Little Hours, gospel lessons from the four evangelists that are used for the major feast days, the seven penitential psalms (to help examination of conscience), plus supplementary devotions and prayers to the saints.

Finally, as we learn from the pamphlet prepared for the Morgan Library exhibit, "the Office of the Dead was in the back of every book of hours the way death itself was always at the back of the medieval mind." One vivid page highlighted in the exhibition shows a dying person at home surrounded by loved ones. "His soul, in the form of a naked child, flies heavenward to God, assisted by an angel who wards off a demon."

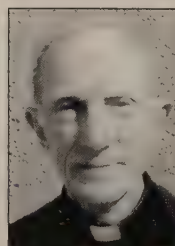
Anyone in possession of a book of hours could look at it and say, "This is my life." Even Henry VIII, who was the supposed owner of one book on display, could have said that. The written text was always in Latin, the *lingua franca* for educated people in Europe. The illustrations drew heavily on contemporary dress, appearance and settings. The owner of a book occasionally appears as a supplicant in some painted scene. It is common today for preachers and writers to speak of everyone's "book of life." If we could hold a book of hours in our hands, we would see it as a way to visualize and grasp all that goes into our particular history, by the season and indeed by the hour. However busy a typical day may be for us, this compact volume shows us how to squeeze in segments of prayer, continual brief turnings to the Lord. After all, the devout Muslim still manages five times of praise and supplication a day.

In our own large-screen era of amazing visual effects—imagery of the flesh and of fashion and of violence—our meditations could profit from the homely settings depicted in the old book of hours, especially those drawn from the life of the Virgin. Sister Wendy Beckett, that paragon of art explicators, leads the way in showing us how the time of Christ has been reproduced in contemporary modes, by the likes of Jean Fouquet and the Bedford Master.

If we think of our own life, then, as a book of hours, we will turn first of all to identifying the red-let-

ter days. The book will contain homely and even humorous vignettes, for sure, but also penitential outbursts of the heart, as in Psalm 51, the words of a contrite King David. Life offers us continual matter for wonder, thankfulness and praise, that is, for ongoing psalms of our own composition. Our load of puzzlement and frustration and grief can be assuaged when we position ourselves with the figures under the cross. And since considerations of death are thrust continually before us, our book of life will project some forms of mortality and, at the day's end, have us commend ourselves into God's hands.

Each time we celebrate the Mass of Resurrection for someone who has gone to God, we open the book of his or her life and read from it, don't we? What a gift it is that each of us, during our day in the sun, can fashion and keep refashioning our own individual tome, our book of hours that is meant to be indeed, very rich.



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On Preparing for a Jubilee

Katherine Hanley, C.S.J., Ph.D.



Maybe it's the moon or some biorhythmic fluke, but of late it seems that dozens of people have mentioned to me a coming jubilee celebration: a wedding anniversary, an anniversary of ordination or religious profession, and a parish celebration of jubilee.

Jubilees are wonderful occasions. They deserve to be observed, not only for the celebrants but for the rest of us as well. When we come together to ritualize twenty-five or fifty or even sixty years of fidelity to marriage or religious vows, or of fidelity to God's people as a priest or minister, we are all blessed and inspired by the realization that these men and women, ordinary folks like the rest of us, have hung in there and stayed faithful. That's no small thing. We need all the celebrations we can get. Jubilees are fun.

Parishes too observe jubilees, looking back at their history and the ways in which they have grown and served. The philosopher Kirkegaard noted long ago that we live our lives forward but we understand them backward. Jubilee gives individuals and couples and parish communities an opportunity to understand life backward, reflecting on God's providence and the joys and challenges of the journey.

Some years ago, in an Advent meditation, a speaker reminded us that “hearses are not followed by U-Hauls.” We laughed, but she had a point.

Preparations for a jubilee are often busy and engaging. We think about themes, food, a liturgical celebration, invitations. When we are invited to a jubilee, we ask about gifts, and we want to know who else will be there. All of these pieces are important. But there might be some other preparations for jubilee, other possibilities for readying oneself or the parish for the public observance. I list a few of them.

Letting go. Jubilee time in the biblical tradition was a time of pardon and letting go. Debts were cancelled, and prisoners could be released. What calls to let go might I hear? Are there past hurts that I have carried and nurtured? Past grievances that I have cherished? Old angers? Lack of reconciliation? I spoke once with a woman who, now in her sixties, still professed anger that her parents had made her miss social functions in high school because she had to care for younger siblings. I asked her what might help her let go of that anger. Her response was that it would be impossible because her parents, who owed her an apology, were now deceased. Could that debt, real or imagined, be cancelled in preparation for jubilee?

Some men and women religious who entered their congregations in what we now call “the old days, the pre-Vatican II days” can tell stories of hurtful experiences from their formation years. Although these tales can be humorous, the angry edge may still creep in. Might that hurt be released so that we are no longer prisoners of the past?

Most of the parishes in this country have undergone striking changes, demographic and otherwise, in the past twenty or thirty years. At times those changes are blamed on a “they” as in “they didn’t consult us” or “they just went ahead and did it” or “they always do

things like that.” Is it time to forgive “them,” so that we and they can be free?

It is difficult to imagine logging twenty-five or fifty years of marriage, ordination, religious profession or parish life without chalking up some mistakes, big and small. Sometimes guilt about these mistakes has a longer and stronger hold than the mistakes themselves. Letting go of guilt can be incredibly freeing.

Jubilee can also be an appropriate time to let go of some behavior which is keeping us from the fullness of life. This might be the abuse of some substance (alcohol, tobacco, food) or overindulgence in a behavior (gambling, internet, TV) or a host of other possibilities. To let go of desires such as these, twelve-step or other supportive groups can be profoundly helpful. If one has already made the choice to let them go, jubilee is an occasion for deep gratitude.

Moving inward. Many adults have found spiritual direction to be a wonderful help at various points in their lives. A regular meeting with a director can help discover where and how God is working. As jubilee time nears, spiritual direction can be a blessed preparation.

Other spiritual preparations suggest themselves in preparation for jubilee. A retreat, private, directed or preached, might be a rich source of grace. I regularly hear of occasions where an entire parish community joins in retreat. I know of two couples who are preparing for and celebrating their jubilee by making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. A pilgrimage, which is both an outward and an inward journey, can be both delightful and life-changing.

For some persons, the thirty-day Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius hold a deep jubilee blessing. At many retreat houses or other centers, the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life (sometimes called the “Nineteenth Annotation”) allow participants to make the Spiritual Exercises through daily prayer and weekly meetings with a director over the course of a year.

Inward movement can be helped in other ways: the use of a journal, the possibility of help through counseling or therapy, a desire to seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a renewed commitment to daily prayer and reflection. Suppose that the members of a parish decided to prepare for their year of jubilee through a recommitment to daily prayer. What a wonderful celebration that could be. Everyone would be touched by the jubilee preparations.

The journey inward may reveal to us that after these many years of fidelity to God through marriage or

riesthood or religious profession, God is inviting us to new ways of prayer. We may have said prayers for years; now we are called to let go of words. Others may be surprised to find themselves returning to older, more traditional prayers. Some discover centering prayer or the Prayer of the Hours. Like the disciples, we ask Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray," and are helped anew.

Simplifying. One of the inevitable results of many years of life and ministry is, quite simply, stuff, lots of stuff, some valuable and some junk. Is there a parish in Christendom which does not have broken furniture, coffee makers lacking parts, hymnals long unused. . . . You get the picture. Our homes? Our rectories and convents and residences? Check the basements and attics. It is no secret that one of the fastest growing industries in the country is the storage industry. Now we pay to store the stuff we no longer use.

What if I began with my own stuff, giving away or throwing away the things I have perhaps lugged from place to place for many years? I may have taught in ten different high schools; do I need all those yearbooks? Once, long ago, I thought about cross-country skiing or golf; am I likely to take up either sport any time soon? This list could go on indefinitely: craft supplies, exercise equipment, you name it. Some years ago, in an advent meditation, a speaker reminded us that "hearses are not followed by U-Hauls." We laughed, but she had a point. Old stuff, like old hurts, takes up unnecessary space. Letting it go can be wonderfully freeing.

Moving outward. Jubilee can be a rich and wonderful opportunity for both individuals and parishes to move outward and make new choices. These can involve the entire community or a few interested people. I know of one parish that entered into a year of discernment and then moved to adopt a sister parish in a needy area of our country. They made this decision not out of a "do-good" mentality but in order to learn from the other parish, to widen their own hearts and borders. Another parish community, newly reconfigured with two other parishes, brought a proposal to become more welcoming to Spanish-speaking Catholics and made a commitment to learn hymns and some prayers in Spanish.

Sometimes as we age it gets easier and easier to say "I'm too old to become a lector, chair a committee, lead a prayer group, climb a mountain, learn to appreciate renaissance art, try a new recipe, go bowling, etc." Jubilee could invite us to make new choices, healthy and exciting choices. These can be as simple as using

a new translation of the Scriptures for our prayer or as daunting (for some) as learning to swim.

Giving gifts. Jubilee is gift-giving time. And let's be honest here: do we need any more stuff (see above)? What if we reversed the trend and gave gifts? I am thinking particularly of the gifts we might give to the future. After all, if jubilee celebrates the past, does it not also call us to affirm and support the future? Otherwise it becomes a giant nostalgia fest, harmless enough but without real spirit.

How could we give to the future? There are dozens of ways: through contributions to causes which support children or the earth, by planting a garden or trees, by providing technology for schools, by funding research, by badgering our congresspersons to support similar causes.

One of the best ways of giving to the future is by affirming and supporting those members of our families or parishes or religious congregations who are the future. They are not the parishes or the Church of tomorrow; they are the parish and the Church and the community of today. Do we support them, or is it easier sometimes to mumble about their music or dress or issues? Jubilee might call us to give to the future.

Although Thoreau cautioned us long ago to beware of any enterprise that requires new clothes, most of us do in fact get new clothes for jubilees. And why not? Jubilee is, after all, a party. But can I also clothe myself in forgiveness? In a return to the Source of all? In renewed simplicity of life? Can we as parish clothe ourselves in outreach? In renewed commitment to deep prayer? To offer joyful welcome to others? And can all of us clothe ourselves in a promise to reverence and support the future? If so, jubilee will be a springboard into newness, not only for us but for our world. Not a bad jubilee present, this renewed hope in God's providence.

My own jubilee is coming up shortly; since we always preach what we need to hear, can I take my own words to heart?

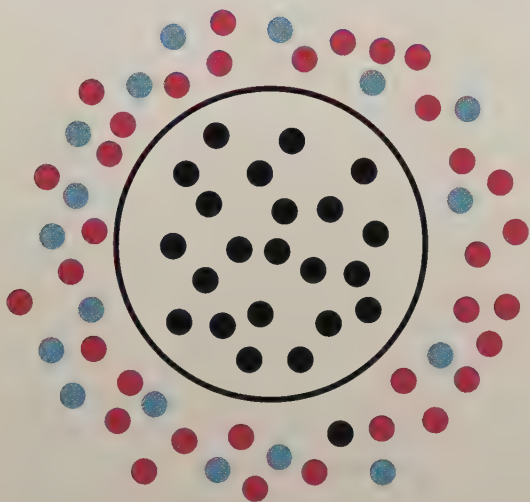


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INSIDE/OUTSIDE THE CAMP:

Places of Encounter

J. Edward Owens, O.S.S.T., Ph.D.,
with responses by
Thomas H. Dymowski, O.S.S.T., M.Div., and
William J. Moorman, O.S.S.T., Ph.D.



In HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (Vol. 26, Summer 2005) Luisa M. Saffiotti wrote an article on forming Church ministers for the twenty-first century. Therein, among her list of skills needed for formators, she utilizes the biblical images of “itinerancy” and going “outside the camp.” I find Saffiotti’s use of these images quite intriguing. Her article focuses much on the need for multicultural awareness, diversity, and sensitivity to suffering in the world. She makes two statements: “It is also important to form for itinerancy, for the capacity and willingness to go ‘outside the camp,’ to be among those ‘others’ relegated to a place outside the familiar center;” and “Itinerancy demands going outside the institution, outside culturally conditioned perceptions and beliefs, because it is ‘outside the camp’ that we meet a God who cannot be controlled. It is ‘outside the camp’ that we meet the Other who is different and discover who we are and what to do” (p. 15).

In this article I wish to build on Saffiotti’s imagery and offer broader biblical and psycho-spiritual reflections. At the end I invite two colleagues, one engaged in parish ministry and the other in healing ministry to troubled clergy and religious, to offer brief responses from their perspectives and experience. The hope is that our contributions will build upon Saffiotti’s invitation to, “join the ongoing conversation about formation” (p. 20).

The motif of the “camp” in the Old Testament is complex in its historical development and includes various literary settings: the desert, the semi-nomadic, and the military, with aspects of ritual purity and proper order in many of the scenes. Building on Saffiotti’s insights on itinerancy and going outside the camp, I could highlight the tensions inherent in finding God and one another inside *and* outside the camp. The many and non-systematic episodes about encampment in the Old Testament offer grist for ongoing hermeneutical reflection and refinement.

THE PRIMACY OF WATER

Essential to Old Testament camping scenes is the presence of *water*. Lack of water spells imminent death in a hot and often hostile environment. During the exodus in the desert the Israelites repeatedly murmur, complaining “against Moses, saying, ‘What shall we drink?’” (Exodus 15:24, 27; see also Joshua 11:5; Numbers 21:12). The motif of water is rich in meaning. As a natural and indispensable element, water speaks to life and death. In the Old Testament world of Palestine where water was contingent on seasonal rainfall, water figured significantly in daily life. Lack of water was a serious dilemma as noted in many passages (Exodus 7:24; 17:1-7; 1 Kings 17:1-6; Jeremiah 14:1-6). Beginning as an essential element of creation (Genesis 1:2, 6, 7), water then unfolds as an image for the Lord’s salvific activity and spiritual refreshment: “For waters shall break from the wilderness, and streams in the desert” (Isaiah 35:6; see also 41:18; Psalms 23:2). Though also a typical motif for destruction and death (Genesis 6-7 [the Flood]) and human misery (Job 3:24; Lamentations 1:16), water also unfolds as an image for protection and restoration (Psalms 18:16-17; 32:6; 46:4).

Applied to formation, water as a motif reminds us that we must designate and demand certain life-giving requisites in forming ministers, whether the context is formal formation toward clerical ordination/final religious profession/lay pastoral leadership, or one’s ongoing formation throughout life. To the point, what is the common “water” we all must find, recognize, share equitably, and drink wherever we may be at any place and time? What is the “water” without which we all perish? These rhetorical questions relate to Saffiotti’s

When priests or religious dig their own “well” or claim ownership of their “oasis,” they place themselves outside the camp.

comments about “organizational aversion” by which she means priests and religious who “. . . prefer to live alone and have no desire to involve themselves in any of the institutional works or concerns of their communities. (I am not referring here to situations in which religious assigned to ministries geographically distant from their communities live alone but remain tightly connected to and active in the concerns of their communities.)” When priests or religious dig their own “well” or claim ownership of their “oasis,” they place *themselves* outside the camp. The barest basics of communal encounter are lost.

Examples, beyond those Saffiotti cites, include poor financial stewardship of personal and apostolic income, as well as a high sense of entitlement with personal wants superseding anything that relates to the common good. The individual “owns” a residence, car, or expense account more than having use and stewardship of such things to do the work of the community. Related to Saffiotti’s story of the candidate who availed himself of community funds because he’d studied so hard and deserved a treat (p. 9), I recall hearing of a religious who made a good salary in a chaplaincy position, more than twice or three times that of other religious living with him. Over a few years he accumulated a water bed, membership at a tanning salon, and fine jewelry. When challenged about it, he quipped that he made more than all the other community members combined. He also worked long hours, often on-call with a pager, and had to take care of himself. One can see that he had staked a claim to his personal well, his oasis. He was a member of a community but tented well outside the camp. The others had to conserve and drink from their shared “water.” He’d conserved his own.

Further, the water motif speaks to more than tangible goods. Since water in the scriptures informs our understanding of creation and redemption, the inability or unwillingness to share shows its face in selfishness

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with time (my day off, my vacation, my availability) and space (my bedroom and office, my tolerance of others’ guests). Such attitudes toward the gift of water, intended somehow for the life and nourishment of all, bespeak sinning against that life-giving creation and gift of redemption that the scriptures proclaim. These deeper implications go well beyond canonical legislation about community life, financial accountability, and everyone’s legislated entitlements to certain goods and prerogatives. There is the danger of cultivating a community landscape wholly unattractive to healthy, mature candidates. Visitors see nothing life-giving at work in the way members treat one another or reflect a shared charism. Candidates may be offered visitors’ accommodations but not invited to sip from the waters of the community’s spirit and energy. A truly mature and observant person senses hospitality or its lack.

I recall attending a formation conference and asking to concelebrate at the Mass in a certain religious community’s chapel. Afterward, I asked about possibilities for lunch, not wanting to invite myself in or appear presumptuous. I was given verbal directions to nearby fast food eateries and sent on my way as the others adjourned to the dining room. The next day I went back again for Mass. This time a religious greeted me, asked where I was from, and invited me to join them for lunch. I was now invited inside the camp. That felt like a gracious invitation to come to the water, not like being treated as the unwelcome or tolerated alien. (In the Old Testament all Israelites were socially responsible for the widow, the orphan, and the alien.) That gesture more than made up for what happened the previous day. It helped me contextualize what had happened as out of character with that religious community’s truest self.

Further, one thinks of the inability to let go of grudges and embrace forgiveness. I have come to believe that one’s gradual hoarding of “water” in the camp often goes back to old hurts, whatever their roots: family of origin issues, previous local community experiences, or personal failure. How many times have we heard a priest or religious say they are acting in such a

way because of what was done to them? Because of previous experiences of community living or ministry, they feel the need to watch out for themselves. Without dismissing or trivializing the pain of such feelings, we must recognize that the essential “water” of community is always somewhere and somehow *in the camp, with the camp*. Consistent investment in one another must be valued and manifested. One may not always be *in the camp* but must always be *with the camp*.

Camp is also not all about spatial proximity. Seasoned priests and religious know that co-dwellers can be strangers, while friends at a distance can maintain delightful communication and connectedness. This reality is becoming more palpable with the twenty-first century communication technology of Internet, FAX, cell phones, and conference calls. But what about those who feel estranged and outside the camp or have burned their own bridges while blaming others for the fire? How do we invite marginated members back to the camp and beyond the attitudes, behaviors, and choices that led them to feel tolerated or exiled? How do we humbly take ownership of the collective “camp decisions” that may have well contributed to such situations and ask for our communal soul-searching, apologies, and rethinking?

THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD

Like water, the Lord’s presence pervades the camp motif in the Old Testament. That divine presence demands a certain holiness and ritual purity among the people: “Because the Lord your God travels along with your camp, to save you and hand over your enemies to you, therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you” (Deuteronomy 23:15). In the Old Testament, wherever the Lord chooses to become manifest holiness becomes apparent (Exodus 3:5; Isaiah 6:3). Divine presence thus offers common ground which all can claim and embrace. Such presence transcends human vagaries and pettiness because the Lord is the source of the water from which all creation drinks, the source of holiness from which all can partake.

Authentic community must find its origin in the numinous presence of God. Anything other than holy presence spells danger of idolatry, rebellion, and anti-religion. Every encounter demands attention to right disposition, genuineness, and honesty. The driving question is not, “Is the Lord among us?” but rather,

Are *we* standing before the Lord in integrity and truth?" From the earliest pre-monarchic images of the Lord present in the ark (1 Samuel 4:5-9) down to later images of the Lord present in the temple in glory or in holiness (Exodus 29:43-45; Isaiah 6:1-5), the Lord somehow journeys with the Chosen People. Further, "tent" imagery in the Old Testament camp scenes enjoys a theological significance. Earlier tradition speaks of the tent *outside* or at the *edge* of the camp, a place fraught with danger and necessary vigilance. Later priestly tradition speaks more of the tent at the *center* of the camp, an emphasis with overtones of the liturgical assembly. Whichever the ancient tradition involved, the Lord remains ultimately transcendent, while also manifested in real events in creation: "I will be with you . . ." (Exodus 3:12). God chooses to remain in the fray of human life and to journey with the people.

These various usages indicate that our scriptural understanding of the Lord's presence is rich and varied, conditioned by time, place, and theological interests. But in every paradigm the Lord is somehow present. This spirit is praised in Psalm 139: "O, Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I stand." Hence, in every encounter, whether inside, at the edge, or outside the camp, we all find that common holy ground from which to drink the gift of water.

This biblical-theological message offers grist for understanding formation and ministry in this century. The smaller numbers of priests and growing number of parish administrators demand that formators model what lies ahead for the Church, both inside and outside the camp. Borrowing again on the tent motif, no pastoral benefit emerges in making ordained priestly leadership as the ideal "tent" at the center of the camp and relegating other models to tolerated edges of the camp. Such images will not invite healthy and competent leaders to step forward with energy and enthusiasm. Such posturing also ignores logistical realities that will not go away soon and that demand proactive attention in prayer and faith. Will we believe that the Lord is at the center *and* on the edge of the camp? Will we form ordained and lay pastoral leaders able to work the center, the edges, and areas outside the camp?

LEADERSHIP AT THE CENTER, ON THE EDGE, AND OUTSIDE THE CAMP

Coming full-circle, what do these biblical and psycho-spiritual reflections offer for the formation of Church ministers for the twenty-first century?

Borrowing again on the tent motif, no pastoral benefit emerges in making ordained priestly leadership as the ideal "tent" at the center of the camp and relegating other models to tolerated edges of the camp.

Essentially, our current challenges demand leaders able to work the whole camp with preparedness and pastoral care. The tent motif discussed here offers a useful analogy. Leaders must be prepared to station themselves at the edge of the camp, that place of danger requiring the leader's courage and vigilance. He or she must be really present to the Lord and for others. Such leadership is devoted to the life and security of the camp. Leaders are on watch and in the fray, not comfortable back at the palace (so David's sin with Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11:1-5).

Likewise, leaders also bring the people together at the center of the camp. Such leaders challenge misconduct and model accountability. They make all places of encounter (at the center, on the edge, or outside) settings in which the Lord's abiding presence is felt and praised. The tent is the center of the camp in the Old Testament Priestly tradition, a place where divine holiness and human ritual purity meet. Hence, leaders must foster a liturgical life that nourishes and empowers the members.

In sum, leaders of the twenty-first century must be able to "work the camp," with an eye to potential new leaders within the membership and to outsiders who surprisingly have something to teach as well. It is noteworthy that Moses employs the water-savvy skills of a Midianite outsider to slake the thirsty Israelites on their wilderness journey: "Moses said 'Do not leave us, for you know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us. Moreover, if you go with us whatever good the Lord does for us, the same we will do for you'" (Numbers 10:31; see also Exodus 2:1-10 where women both Hebrew and Egyptian save Moses from the water). Hence, even outsiders can at times be God's instruments. The thoughtful and resourceful leader has eyes open to all such opportunities and graces in ministry. Such wise resourcefulness embraces inclusion and ecumenism.

THE CAMP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The camp motif is more prominent in the Old Testament, but the New Testament offers two significant images that speak to the topic. Hebrews 13 calls for community and service pleasing to God. It begins with these words: "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured" (13:1-3). The chapter goes on to write of Jesus' suffering outside the camp: "Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people with his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured" (13:12-13).

This New Testament challenge speaks to Saffiotti's hermeneutical insights on ministry today. She writes, "As the twenty-first century begins, attention is focused on the extreme suffering in the world, and it is in the way that we collectively respond to that suffering that 'God will be lovingly revealed or loudly denied'" (p. 6). She goes on to write of ministers called to be prophetic, reading the signs of the times and challenging and empowering others (p. 8). A characteristic of the Old Testament prophets was their persecution by those who could not bear the truth of their words. Modern prophets must have the strength to embrace suffering, not simply seek comfort and convenience.

The Book of Revelation ends with a promise and a warning: "They marched up over the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved

city. And fire came down from heaven and consumed them" (20:9). These words announce the defeat of evil and the triumph of God and the saints. No more will there be any threat from enemies outside the camp. Then begins the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1). Peace and justice shall reign. This closing image in the New Testament speaks to the task of current formators as encouragers of ongoing conversion after any formation program. As Saffiotti writes, "Finally, formators and those in leadership in their institutions need to be conscious of the models of formation they are using and of the place in those models of forming for justice and peace and for conversion" (p. 20). The new heaven and earth are at once a gift and a challenge, in the end the shining culmination of conversion in peace and justice.

RESPONSES

Two colleagues now offer brief responses to my article from the vantage point of their respective specialized ministries. They also engage with Saffiotti's call for formation that demands responsiveness: "We need to form ministers for attention to our world in extremis and for the capacity to respond meaningfully to it" (p. 7).



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"TOWARD THE SOCIAL" IN MINISTRY

A Response by Thomas H. Dymowski, O.S.S.T., M.Div.

In Saffiotti's recommendations for contemporary ministry she notes: "Ministers need to embody a shift from the twentieth century's 'turn toward the subject' to the twenty first century's 'turn toward the social.'" Noting that "such a turn would constitute a healthy psychological and psychosocial progression," she points out the importance for "both individuals and communities to turn inward to do the necessary healing and growth work in order to be able to move outward and

serve as effective agents of transformation" (p. 8).

While spiritual direction (sometimes along with pastoral counseling or psychotherapy) addresses the inner life of candidates for ministry, external formation advising looks to the public dimension of the budding minister's attitudes, behaviors and choices. What takes place within the "camp" of one's spiritual life will impact one's ministry of reaching out to others. While a candidate's feeling of call to ministry embraces his or her growing relationship with God in prayer and the desire for charitable works, that call still needs to be validated in the external forum of formation advising through tangible fruits of prayer: social awareness and

works of justice that mirror God's own love and mercy.

Given the current ministerial challenges described by Saffiotti and developed by Owens, ministerial candidates must be formed for concrete works of social justice to benefit whole communities of peoples. Such communities respond to the culture of individualism, materialism, and greed. Ministers today must move outside the safe and somewhat predictable camp of parish life as usual" with its pastoral councils, committees, small groups, and devotional societies (valuable though they are) to a commitment to evangelization that immerses them in the realities of public life in search of the common good.

Ministers need training in such skills as communicating, organizing, advocacy, negotiation and collaboration, they expect to be prophetic in today's world. Ministerial candidates need to learn skills in social analysis and how to reflect critically on social structures and events impacting the lives of those they serve. For example, media images in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita drove home the magnitude of poverty our nation tolerates and which is increasing as government-approved tax cuts reduce programs and services to the most needy among us. How must ministers respond?

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops document *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility* encourages us as Church to be involved in the political process. Rejecting partisan politics, the bishops urge the Church to speak prophetically to the pressing social and moral issues of our times by participating in the democratic process our nation affords us. Here is yet another place where the encounter with those "outside the camp" of our parishes can show us God's face.

Looking outside the camp of my current parish ministry, I see us uniting together with our neighbors of diverse faith traditions, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic levels for a deeper involvement in community organizations such as Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) and Metro Alliance in San Antonio, and Dallas Area Interfaith in North Texas. Other such organizations throughout the country have united dozens of faith communities, schools, and agencies into a powerful force for change to make people's lives better, especially the poor. As the Industrial Areas Foundation teaches, power to effect change in society comes in two varieties: money and organized people. Such grass roots power holds public officials accountable for their trumpeted policies ostensibly aimed at

improved neighborhoods, better schools, safer streets, and creating a more civil society. Evangelization rings true when it promotes the integral development of people weighed down by society's systemic neglect and apathy in the face of suffering.

As the pastor of an urban parish in West Dallas with a high immigrant population, I have been challenged to "turn toward the social." The human need within the parish is overwhelming, and more people are coming all the time. The number of registered parishioners in the Diocese of Dallas has increased from 253,936 Catholics in 1992 to 534,180 in 2005, mostly due to Hispanic immigration. The actual number of Catholics our parishes serve is even greater because many of the new arrivals choose not to register due to their immigrant status. Drugs, crime, poverty, and challenges to the family unit in such an environment help me understand why so many parishioners can become content with "church life as usual" with pious societies, small communities of special interest, and religious education for the sacraments. My current experience of ministry has led me to believe that ministerial formation would be irresponsible if it were not directed toward helping people address their actual living conditions in need of dramatic remedial action. I am finding that genuine spiritual leadership in the parish today requires shaping a culture of transparency, accountability, and governance that empowers leaders to address the pressing issues of social justice we encounter within and outside the "camp" of our parishes.

In sum, spiritual direction and formation advising early in ministerial training should seek to facilitate the shift from the "turn to the subject" to the "turn to the social." New ministers will be more effective agents of transformation if seminaries and schools of ministry prepare them to assume the role of spiritual leaders as public persons engaged in the necessary and sometimes baldly political process of bringing about lasting change in society, tangibly preaching the "Good News" in word and action.



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PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL MATURITY AND MINISTRY

A Response by William J. Moorman, O.S.S.T., Ph.D.

Building on the reflections above, I add to the discussion largely from a psycho-spiritual perspective and would like to engage in dialogue in particular with a few of the six psychological realities of current ministerial candidates as outlined by Saffiotti (pp. 9-12).

To begin, many of our candidates for the priesthood and religious life have broad experience of but one pope. While acknowledging the charisma and accomplishments of John Paul II, such a perspective can foster a vision of Catholicism primarily attractive as “inside the camp.” Some new seminarians arrive with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and understand little of the true universality of the Church and its mixed bag of historicity. An underlying dictum is, “Don’t trust anyone ordained in the 1970’s.” The “inside the camp” mentality seems to encourage candidates today to view spirituality as something obtained through a quantity of prayers rather than a relational quality of prayer. This tendency seems typical of current U.S. culture where speed, efficiency, and progress are basic expectations. More is better. Why use dial up when there is the speed of Broadband?

Simplistic understandings of the Church and human life are other challenges. I once had a priest client state that to his mind there exist three types of priests in the Church: those ordained prior to Vatican II (within the camp but now waning in number), those ordained post-Vatican II (now deemed of questionable orthodoxy by some and thus outside the camp), and those he referred to as John Paul II priests (orthodox, sacramental, and inside the camp). I find this statement telling of some current patterns. While not abandoning the Servant-Leader model of priesthood following Vatican II, some recently ordained men seem unenthused about social justice, poverty, and related issues. They evidence a largely sacramental vision of priesthood and sometimes an air of entitlement. In that sense, to borrow a motif from Owens, they tend to hoard the “water” for themselves and their like-minded colleagues in opposition to those they deem outside the camp. Whatever the real extent of this tendency, it certainly offers a palpable challenge to what Saffiotti and others have to say.

Saffiotti goes on to note a lack of emotional maturity in some candidates, stating that if counseling is warranted, does the intensity of that counseling impede the formation process (p. 11)? Can any formation community easily morph into a therapeutic community? When that happens how much does that community get distracted from its mission? I would comment that one reason for psychological testing prior to admittance to any formation program is the assumption that formation is only possible with largely integrated individuals. However, we must acknowledge that the fewer number of applicants to seminaries and religious communities has had an impact on this standard. I sense the danger that we sometimes accept candidates driven more by what they can receive from formation to make them whole than by what they can bring as a gift to the Church. Can they teach, preach, lead, and foster holiness, inclusion, and social justice awareness? Basic human formation issues (more than categorically spiritual, pastoral, or intellectual issues) are what surface after ordination in a diocese or religious community.

Returning to psycho-spiritual development, I recall a seminary candidate in his thirties who believed that the ambiguity of his sexual orientation and his low sex drive made him a good candidate for a celibate lifestyle. He could turn it all over to God. This lack of personal identity and integration on his part is striking when the formation process assumes personal identity as foundational for the vocation of a religious and/or priest. As ministers we are entrusted with the unique responsibility of embracing the sacred intimacy of another’s spiritual life. Can this be possible if we are unable to embrace the mystery and the sanctity of our own identity? Too often candidates are looking for the identity of priest/religious as a vicarious personal identity, which is always a formula for disaster. Most often these individuals insist on external order to balance their internal chaos, and they never achieve the inner peace they long for in their spiritual lives.

In addition we are seeing candidates with demonstrable personality traits such as dependency, avoidance, narcissism, and obsessive/compulsive behavior. These indicators are frequently identified in testing but tolerated in admissions screening and formation programs. Such realities challenge the ongoing dialogue about what belongs “inside the camp.”

Building on yet another point by Saffiotti and developed by Owens, most Western priests and religious enjoy a comfortable lifestyle and appreciable

opportunities for advancement. For them the move to seminary or religious community remains congruent with the life they know. An emerging challenge is the growing acceptance of candidates from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who suddenly find themselves in a remarkably upwardly-mobile lifestyle.

Unfortunately, the danger of entitlement emerges, which only reinforces the sense of a clerically elite culture somehow separate from the people of God. I recall a place where the seminarians were only expected to wash their own laundry and clean their room. All other house-cleaning was done by hired staff. I remember thinking that a young seminarian would be better served if he had to clean communal areas, even restrooms and dining rooms, picking up after others and fixing their idiosyncratic "deficiencies." Such tasks would surely test the virtue of humility and offer grist for spiritual direction and human formation. Comfort zones and personal canons of common sense would be challenged.

Many candidates also hold a worldview in which the gap between our pluralistic society and the mission of the Church proves to be a divide difficult to bridge. As Saffiotti points out, the post-modern individual lacks a sense of continuity, producing insecurity. Returning to a point I made above, many of the recently ordained have only known one pope, which leads many to think that the way the Church is today is the way it always has been and will remain. Things can often become a matter of black and white, with no appreciation for the timeless mystery and wisdom of the gray in human life and faith.

In sum, candidates today may seek holiness as if the search were simply quantitative, to find a set of calculated actions that will result in the desired outcome. Spirituality for such persons resides outside themselves in spiritual practices, as opposed to embracing the mystery of God, others, and self. It is precisely within the embrace of self that the spiritual journey begins. The challenge, with assistance from formation advising and spiritual direction, is to become ever more transparent on one's spiritual journey, i.e., to acknowledge one's strengths and gifts along with weaknesses and

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shortcomings. Unfortunately, some approach their vocation by compartmentalizing the various aspects of their lives. In doing so, they avoid the mystery of self which is the place of encounter with God and is often "outside the camp." Compartmentalized spirituality lacks authenticity because spirituality demands wholeness as holiness. Anecdotally, I once asked a troubled priest who had frequented adult bookstores where God was when he went inside. Looking puzzled at first, he replied that he guessed he had left God in the car.

An insight I have had in my current ministry to troubled priests and religious is that the God they preach is not always the God they worship. While they preach a God of love and compassion, their personal image of God is the judgmental and often punitive parent. Where is the congruency? Some are the most compassionate ministers while critical and unforgiving of themselves. Others are quite compassionate with themselves while stern with others. The formation of future ministers must focus on the ability to grapple with the mystery of self, God, and others. Such is the mystery and task of psycho-spiritual integration as a gift to the Church.



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Towards a Spirituality of Academic Work: *Lessons from Action Research*

David Coghlan, S.J., Ph.D.



This article explores the development of a personal spirituality in academic life. It seeks to help readers, whether academics or students, to find God in the everyday of their academic life. It provides a theological foundation, a philosophical methodology and a practical framework drawn from action research for the development of a spirituality of academic work and life.

Let us begin with a reminder of what it is to be human and to be Christian. God is a God of self-gift, and that gift is given to all people. God is acting in our human experience, and God's self-giving will not be completed until God brings creation to completion. God is with us, and God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Grace means God's self-giving to us, and it exists as a reality of human experience. Accordingly, grace is alive in our acts of consciousness—our experience, our understanding, our judgments, our decisions and our actions. Our efforts to find truth, to be gentle, to be faithful, to be responsible and so on in ordinary life are the actions of grace in everyday life. Grace enables our acts of con-

consciousness to reach to the Ultimate Mystery who is God. In this manner, there is nothing that is purely secular; everything is about God. So our spirituality works through two movements: a "from above-downward" movement as grace is given to us by God, which enables a "from below-upward" movement as we seek to find God in our experience of the everyday.

IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

The Ignatian approach to spirituality views God as one who is active in the world and who invites individuals a) to seek and find God in the experience of their own lives and of the world and b) to respond in action and so to come to an ever closer collaboration with God. The Ignatian God is busy and is to be found not, not only, in some quiet communion, but rather in acting in the world. One of the exercises in the *Spiritual Exercises* invites the individual to pray to find God in the gifts of our world and in how God "works and labors" for us. We seek to love as God loves, and since love is expressed in action, this means that we seek to act as God acts, responding according to the grace we receive.

ACTION RESEARCH

As the name suggests, action research is an approach to social science research that aims to do two things: take action and create knowledge or theory about that action. Action research works through a cyclical process of consciously and deliberately a) planning, b) taking action and c) evaluating the action, leading to further planning and so on. In this manner it has resonances with Ignatian spirituality through its uses of cycles of action and reflection. The second dimension of action research is that it is collaborative, in that the members of the system being studied participate actively in the cyclical process as co-researchers.

One of the significant originators of the theory and practice of action research was the social psychologist, Kurt Lewin. For Lewin, it was not enough to try to explain human systems; one also had to try to change them. It was clear to Lewin and others that working at changing human systems often involved variables that could not be controlled by traditional research methods developed in the physical sciences. These insights led to the development of action research and the powerful

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notion that human systems could only be understood and changed if one involved the members of the system in the inquiry process itself. So the tradition of involving the members of an organization in a change process originated in a scientific premise that this is the best way a) to get better data and b) to effect change.

One framework from action research provides a useful way of viewing the practice of spirituality. An integrative approach to research incorporates three voices and audiences: the first-person, second-person and third-person. Traditionally, research has focused on the third-person: researchers doing research on third-persons and writing a report for an impersonal, other, third-person audience. In a more complete vision of research as presented by action research and many other transformational inquiry approaches, authentic third-person research integrates first- and second-person voices. First-person research is typically characterized as the forms of inquiry and practice that we do on our own, and it addresses our ability to foster an inquiring approach to our own life. This is a process well-established in Ignatian spirituality, particularly through the examination of consciousness in daily life. We rarely pay attention to what is going on in the present, in both ourselves and the situation around us. First-person research can take us "upstream" where we inquire into our basic assumptions, desires, intentions and philosophy of life. This may involve questioning the ethics of the research we do. It can also take us "downstream" where we inquire into our behaviour, ways of relating and our action in the world.

Second-person inquiry/practice addresses our ability to inquire into and work with others on issues of mutual concern, through face-to-face dialogue, conversation and joint action. Second-person research poses an important challenge as to who is involved in the research and how. Can we do research *with* people rather than *on* them? As action research is integrally

When we try to be authentic and do what we do as best we can, God is present and active and we are agents in cooperating with him in his project of understanding and liberating the world.

collaborative and democratic, the quality of second-person inquiry and action is central.

Third-person inquiry/practice aims at creating communities of inquiry, involving people beyond the direct second-person action. Third-person research is impersonal and is actualized through dissemination by reporting, publishing and extrapolating from the concrete to the general. There are plenty of implicit examples of first-, second- and third-person inquiry separately, but what is required now is to explicitly integrate all three persons with action and inquiry.

Ignatian spirituality (inquiry-in-action) and action research (the three voices and audiences) have many common threads. In terms of action research we can see Ignatian spirituality as involving all three of these forms of inquiry/practice, all three audiences. One might begin with a first-person inquiry about how God is found in our own experience. We might engage in a second-person inquiry with others who are living their Christian life in particular circumstances. A third-person inquiry may find expression in a wisdom articulated and enacted impersonally, in structural and institutional terms. The process could flow in other directions, where a third-person account (i.e., reading a book) may stimulate first-person inquiry. Alternatively, participation in a group, such as a social justice group, might stimulate first-person inquiry into the motivations for participating in such a group and stimulate the development of a spirituality that does justice.

The action research perspective can draw together the processes of Ignatian spirituality into a mode of inquiry-in-action whereby the first-person experience of God at work in a person's life, the second-person practice of engaging in faith inquiry and working with others to live and act congruently, and the third-person practice of creating communities of inquiry and reflection all contribute to a broader picture of building communities of faith and a more just society and world.

EMPIRICAL METHOD

The Canadian philosopher-theologian Bernard Lonergan articulates an empirical method that describes the invariant structure of human knowing. He describes the human knower as a subject engaging in three cognitional operations—experiencing, understanding and judging. For example, the person hears a sound and asks what that noise was. Alternatives may present themselves: a door banging, something falling over and so on (what Lonergan calls insights), and the person weighs up the evidence for those alternatives, verifies which is true, and then decides whether action needs to be taken. As there is so much to be known, insights are followed by further insights and so development is possible. This is the invariant approach to research, in whatever field we may work.

We are human; we grow and develop. We have a dynamic cognitional pattern of insight, understanding and judgment though which we can attend to our experience, weigh evidence and form judgments. So we can engage in first-person inquiry into how we are thinking, what we are feeling, where these thoughts and feelings come from, how we can be sure, what they lead us to do, and what we learn about ourselves. A process of self-consciousness occurs through experience, understanding and judgment about one's experience, understanding and judgment.

A similar process for deciding on a course of action takes us through the same set of a) experiencing the situation, b) using sensitivity, imagination and intelligence to answer the question for understanding as to what possible courses of action might be taken, c) reflecting on the possible value judgments as to what is the best option and d) deciding to follow through the best value judgment and being responsible for consistency in knowing and doing. Of course, there is no guarantee that we will attend to experience and the search for insight. We can easily fly from insight, resist the truth and try to escape responsibility. Hence we need to be aware of our biases.

Lonergan presents a “praxis-reflection” approach, and so for him authenticity is characterized by four process imperatives. This is an approach on which we can ground our spirituality of living and research. It calls us to: Be attentive (to the data). Be intelligent (about explaining what the data mean). Be reasonable (have sufficient reasons, adequate evidence for the judgments we make). Be responsible (do the right thing).

Lonergan's methodology forms the basis for attending to a) our own cognitive and acting operations (first person), b) working with other individuals' cognitive and acting operations (second person) and c) seeking to contribute to the wider community of knowledge and action (third person). Returning to the opening point about what it is to be human and to be Christian, this methodology is a structure for enacting our spirituality in the everyday.

FORWARD A SYNTHESIS

The world of academic work and research, is not, of course, always driven by a pure desire to know. Academic life and research, like all aspects of life, are often competitive, political and driven by funding imperatives. In some fields, there are questions about the direction of research that make for major ethical debates and that make demands on our first-, second- and third-person practice. Alienation and burnout occur in the lives of academics and researchers. In short, the world of academic life and research is itself a world that needs God's redeeming grace. We live in a real world, and we are invited to seek and find God in that world.

This article presents action research, Ignatian spirituality and Lonergan's empirical method together as integrating frameworks. What is the core of that synthesis?

Foundation: The starting point is God's love in our hearts and the dynamism that comes from that. God is at work in the world. Hence everything is religious; nothing is purely secular. If research is about making what is unknown known, then God is to be found in pursuing insight. Accordingly, the work of research is itself spiritual, and God is to be found there.

Praxis: Our academic life-in-action comprises first-, second- and third-person practice. We attend to learning about ourselves and what we bring to our research (first-person), learn to work collaboratively with others (second-person) and contribute to better action in the world (third-person).

Authenticity: Being responsible means we have someone to be good for. Being reasonable means knowing that God's spirit is at work and looking at the world with an open mind. Being intelligent means being able to ask why and how. Being attentive means that all data are data about God.

What is next, then, for all who seek to find God in their research and study? Firstly, really to know that God is in our study and our research. What we study

and research is a contribution to the unfolding evolution of knowledge in the world. All knowledge is knowledge about God. So we need to attend to our study and pray about it. Secondly, while we study alone and our study challenges our own learning about ourselves (first-person), it also makes demands on how we inquire with others (second-person). So researching *with* people rather than *on* people is a value to pursue. Our study is to make a contribution to the wider community (third-person). Thirdly, we try to be authentic. We attend to the data, both inside and outside ourselves. We need to have intelligent reasons for how we understand data. We need to make reasonable judgments based on our understanding. And we need to be responsible for who we are and what we do. When we try to be authentic and do what we do as best we can, God is present and active and we are agents in cooperating with him in his project of understanding and liberating the world.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

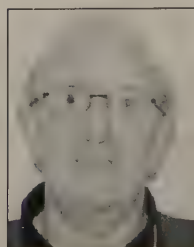
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MORAL DEVELOPMENT:

Strategies and Challenges

Thomas A. Shannon, Ph.D.



The complaints are common enough. “Young people have no sense of morality;” “young people think they can do what they want;” “the new generation thinks that actions have no consequences.” And those who interact with younger people in educational contexts generally agree that their students think that all moral judgments are relative or are to be resolved on the basis of “That’s how I feel” or “It’s my choice” or “My decision is just as good as any one else’s.” Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger felt so strongly about the dangers of moral relativism that he felt compelled to devote a sermon on the topic to the cardinals before they entered the conclave that ultimately elected him as pope. He seems to think that moral relativism infects more than just the young generation. Clearly the sense of moral relativism or, perhaps even worse, moral indifference, is strongly present among many people at different levels of society.

Let’s take it for granted that we are immersed in moral relativism or indifference; where do we go from here? How do we convince people that morality matters? How do we encourage people to grow in responsibility?

MORALITY MATTERS

One key element in answering this question is to keep reminding ourselves that being moral matters. How we behave actually

impacts who we become, and how we treat others affects who they become. Thus, the first answer to the question is that we ourselves must be moral and communicate its importance to others. This is not an easy task because, for most of us, most of the time, moral behavior is behavior into which we have been socialized. Moral behavior is doing what our culture or society or family says is right or wrong. We act on the basis of unconscious or unarticulated beliefs that have been given to us by the social context in which we have grown up. We act in a particular way simply because other people act that way and expect us to act that way. This is one level of moral behavior but surely one of the lowest or most impersonal. In the undergraduate ethics classes that I taught, I would typically ask if the students knew their roommate before they got to college. Generally they did not. Yet, I would note, they would simply go to bed with the unacknowledged assumption that their unknown roommate would neither murder them during the night nor walk off with everything they brought to college. The students would usually laugh nervously as they thought about their behavior. They assumed a moral code, and the assumption was an acceptable one. But the example is a clear demonstration of the power and importance of socialization.

ELEMENTS OF MORALITY

The first element of moral responsibility is for each of us to become aware of the imbedded values in our way of life and to take responsibility for them by either affirming or rejecting them. Frequently we simply do not think about the status quo—it's just there, and we assume that because it's there, it's correct. But once we begin to think about some of our cultural norms, we might find some problems with them. For example, I am currently teaching at Auburn University in Alabama, an area of the country where I have never lived before. I have become increasingly aware of the previous social acceptance of racism and the price that was paid to bring to consciousness the problems of racism and to begin to challenge and change these practices. When one visits various civil rights museums and monuments here, one gets a very strong sense of the difficulties in addressing the values of the status quo. Thus, when we begin to question our inherited values, we might find some problems with various forms of discrimination, economic inequalities, compromising of human dignity, etc. We need to begin

The first element of moral responsibility is for each of us to become aware of the imbedded values in our way of life and to take responsibility for them by either affirming or rejecting them.

reflecting on the meaning of some basic values such as equality, justice and human dignity in relation to our unexamined social norms and to take personal responsibility for how we implement these in our lives. Realizing that we are responsible for our own moral life is the first step to thinking about how to influence others.

A second element of moral responsibility is to recognize that a core platform for morality is the capacity to make a decision. This capacity is a learned skill and a critical one. In learning to make a decision, one begins to learn how to identify what is different about each part of the choice, how each part affects me, what are the consequences of my choice, and how to move beyond simple choice to reasons for the choice. When our children were young, one of the critical practices my wife did was to present them with two different sets of clothing each day and ask them to choose which they wanted. This is a simple decision and one that can be easily structured, but it is a decision. As they matured the decisions became more complicated, and they had to learn what went together and which combinations were unusual, but they knew what a decision was and some rudiments of decision-making. This certainly did not resolve moral questions, but it put them on the track of learning that they had to make decisions and live with the consequences.

A third element of moral responsibility, still on the level of child rearing, is to up the ante on what is decided. This becomes most important when the basis for every thing a child wants to do is that "Everybody else is doing it." And while the common response, "If everyone else were running into a burning house, would you do that too?" is an easy way to deflect some issues, the question also points to a time for another step in encouraging moral responsibility. "What is it you want to do? Why is that a desirable activity? Are there any consequences to the activity? Does the fact

As people set off on their way learning to navigate by themselves, we need to hold them accountable for their actions.

that everyone else is doing it make it desirable, or is the activity something desirable or worthwhile apart from group sanctioning?" One is asking the child to step back for a moment and be self-critical. And this is neither easy nor without a certain amount of pain for all parties involved. Requiring accountability for a child's actions or plans means that adults have to care about what they do, have to be involved in their life and want to take partial responsibility for their process of maturity.

At this level, encouraging moral behavior requires that some decisions are challenged, that the individuals involved take responsibility for what they want to do, and that they put forth reasons to justify their actions. Continually presenting a child with a set of rules or absolutes or demands such as "because I say so" may in fact work for a while, but such moral imperatives are both the seeds of future rebellion and a stunting of the ability to develop a moral position for one's self. This is not to say that authority and rules are not important. Rather, to reiterate, the personal acceptance of such a pre-existing set of moral norms is more important, and acceptance is enhanced by helping the child self-consciously engage in a discussion and evaluation of them.

A fourth element is the difficult process of learning to trust one's child in making decisions. To use a different example, but not one without any moral implications, think of trusting your young adult children with the family car for the first several times. True, they have had lessons; true, you have sat beside them while they drove; true, they passed the test. But there they go, off in a vehicle that weighs several thousand pounds and can cause tremendous damage to themselves and others. You have prepared them as best you can, and now they must complete the learning process by developing the experience of driving itself. The same is true of morality. We can encourage moral behavior, we can help moral

development, but at a certain point individuals have to do it by themselves, on their own, without anyone observing them. One has given them the moral map, helped them learn to read it, but now you hope the map is internal and will help them to navigate their own way.

And here is where yet another element in moral development enters. As people set off on their way learning to navigate by themselves, we need to hold them accountable for their actions. The issue is not only whether you navigated well, but whether you got to your destination. Did you do what you set out to do, or did you change course, not achieve the goal, or back off and let someone else pick up the slack? If people are not held accountable for the consequences of their actions, the completion of moral development will not happen. People quickly learn the boundaries of acceptable behavior and just as quickly slip to the lowest standard possible. While this does not necessarily make one a moral cretin, neither does it inspire higher moral behavior. Calling people on their behavior makes them aware of what they are doing by challenging them to explain the basis for their actions because in fact their behavior matters.

THE ROLE OF JUSTICE AND CHOICE IN MORAL DEVELOPMENT

And it is at this stage that there is a necessary social role for the development of moral behavior. First, none of us lives in isolation. Second, social mores, at least, make an impact on us. As noted earlier, we grow up in a set of values from society and our family that form the context and basis of our behavior. These values are our first moral code. Third, each society implicitly or explicitly holds up certain values and goals to be affirmed and actualized by its members. So we need to think about this dimension as well. Many decades ago, the World Council of Churches promoted the theme of the Responsible Society. The general orientation was the necessity of accepting responsibility for the formation of both moral values and moral agents in society. More recently the Catholic bishops of the United States also contributed to this discussion in their pastoral *Economic Justice for All*. The purpose of a society in which justice is a significant element is to help members of the society flourish and participate actively so that all are benefited. In the Catholic tradition, this is called achieving the common good. And behind this stands the assumption that part of the social and moral obligation is the establishment of

structures that enable people to achieve a proper civic and moral maturity so that they may be active citizens.

The Catholic Bishops used the phrase “justice as participation” to describe this two-way model of justice. Here justice requires that people receive the appropriate assistance they need whether this be adequate public education, appropriate housing, or relevant health care. This is the side of the justice equation that focuses on teaching and instilling moral values and standards, whether in the home or the school, or in various political structures in which we live. One can think of this as education for moral citizenship.

On the other hand, these goods and values that model this behavior for others become the basis for a corresponding obligation on these individuals to contribute their gifts to society. Justice as participation is not a handout or charity or a patching of social gaps. Rather, it is an understanding that we are in society together, that we have mutual obligations to one another, and that the quality of our society is based on how well we make provision for all to participate. This side of the equation emphasizes the obligation to act on our values to help all achieve the common good. By highlighting the theme of the responsible society or justice as participation, we are making a strong statement that our society is both an important part of our moral formation and the locus where we live out and actualize our moral values. And by living out our moral values in public we model this behavior for others and encourage like behavior. While it is true that many social reforms can be effectively made primarily on the social level, nonetheless ultimately individuals either vote for such reforms or validate them by living out the values embodied in legislation and social structures. Social reform without a corresponding change of hearts and minds will not get too far, but the requisite change of hearts and minds needs social encouragement and reinforcement.

One current challenge to this important perspective comes from the somewhat widespread assumption that simply to choose an action is sufficient justification for performing that action. This is the position that states: “It’s my choice, and once I make that choice, any further discussion is irrelevant, and any critique of my choice is simply off limits.” Individual choice represents ultimate justification. The problem here is that some choices are in fact poor ones, improper, or simply wrong. While the choice to spend one’s money now instead of investing it in some type of retirement account may in fact be the person’s choice, in the long run it is a poor

Justice as participation is not a handout or charity or a patching of social gaps.

one. One’s choice to take advantage of the mistakes or poor judgment of others to advance one’s own career may put others at a disadvantage or result in their being fired. One’s choice to pad one’s expense account, falsify reports or the results of various experiments, or to defraud one’s firm, though to be sure individual choices, are in fact illegal and wrong—as many executives and scientists found out to their dismay.

Part of our culture’s acceptance of this position is a misunderstood sense of individual freedom, tolerance, and immunity from the mores and morals of our culture. This understanding of freedom assumes that freedom simply means unfettered choice. The corresponding understanding of tolerance is that one should never criticize the choice of another regardless of what that choice is. These ideas are reinforced by an expanded and uncritical sense of autonomy that assumes that only the individual can choose for his or her self or that the individual is the only one who knows what is in his or her best interest. Yet is it clear that even though I autonomously choose, I can still make poor and morally wrong choices. The simple fact of choice does not in fact guarantee that the choice is the right choice or a morally appropriate choice. Minimally, we need to look at the content of the choice and the consequences of the choice. Individual choices do bump up against other individuals and social practices, and we need to evaluate how choices fit into a larger moral and social framework.

MORALITY AND THE COMMON GOOD

Understanding justice as participation will help critique this position by insisting that, as citizens, we also seek the good of others and contribute to develop various goods we have in common. Additionally, realizing that individual choices have consequences that affect

others can help critique this position. But again, I assume a role for society in helping to shape and/or critique individual decisions. But even moving to a position that affirms that choices can and sometimes must be criticized will put us in a better position morally speaking. And it will reinforce the necessity of having individuals present some kind of justification for their actions. Such is the beginning of moral responsibility. For if the beginning and end of morality is simply choosing, then I never have to be accountable to anyone else, and I will continue to live in moral and civic isolation.

For the last several years before her retirement, my wife taught remedial reading in an inner city elementary (K-6) school in the second largest city in New England. The population of the school was on average around 800 students. The school was a genuine United Nations with about 40 different languages represented. The majority of the students were poor, and the percentage of single-parent families was high. Often socialization was inadequate, sometimes language reflected the street rather than the school, and some parents seemed indifferent. The school functioned quite well, and the vast majority of students were on target for academic goals and age appropriate in their behavior.

Yet in the last months of one school year, the faculty and administration discovered a small group of extortionists in the 5th grade—one boy and three girls. They were shaking down kids in the lower grades with a variety of threats if lunch money or spending money were not handed over. The group had amassed several hundred dollars. One of the parents observed that if kids were dumb enough to hand over their money then that was their problem. Another parent denied that her child could do this, but when confronted with evidence and finding the money in her child's room, she took prompt action to remedy the situation. The other parents were indifferent to the situation. The principal helped by having the children collect various containers that could be recycled so the refunds obtained could be given to the victims. But the principal took the bottles to the store, rather than have the kids do it.

This anecdote is a microcosm of many of the problems that are encountered along the road to developing moral responsibility, particularly in the younger generation. But note that the problems are both individual and social. It is clear that parents did not do their job in instilling moral values. But it is also clear that the social signals of moral wrongdoing were not

too clear because parents were essentially allowed to ignore their children's behavior and because the principal took some of the responsibility of restitution off of the students. Moral development is both an individual and social task. These are related in a dynamic process, and because of that it is frequently hard to get hold of how to enter the process and how to change it.

A CRITICAL TASK

Yet the task of moral development must be engaged even though it is a complex, difficult, and at times exhausting process. As individuals we must aim at developing our own moral sense as well as that of those for whom we are immediately responsible. But as citizens we must also be aware of the critical moral values that are imbedded in our social policies. A moral citizen is one who acts out his or her moral values both at home and in society, whether that society is the neighborhood, a parent-teacher group at the school, or one's colleagues at work. The task of acting morally appears frequently in our daily lives. Moral actions can be as simple as letting someone get into traffic ahead of us, genuinely asking someone with some difficulties how they are, encouraging someone with a word of kindness, participating in various food drives, discussing current events at home and with friends, and participating in civic activities at various levels from voting to accepting jury duty and perhaps even standing for some local public office. We all have opportunities each day both to act morally and to encourage moral behavior. By recognizing and taking advantage of these routine and frequently mundane individual and social opportunities, we are doing our share in contributing to a more just society and the development of moral citizens.



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The Hearts of Children

Margaret Cessna, H.M.



A week after my grand-niece Morgan's seventh birthday in October, she told me that she had fifty dollars and was saving her money. She wanted to buy a water slide for her back yard. She needed three-hundred fifty dollars more and knew that it would take a long time to reach her goal, but at seven she had already learned the discipline of saving for something that she really wanted. Last year she saved every quarter and dollar that she got for her birthday, from the Tooth Fairy, and from her grandparents, mom, dad, aunts and uncles so that she could buy a *Build A Bear*. She got her bear. A water slide would take a little longer but Morgan was confident that she could do it.

In the meantime, my family is very supportive of Heifer International and its program of providing animals to families who are poor all over the world. We have exchanged Heifer animals at Christmas time for years. We did so again this year but added a new element. It was decided to do a joint project that would include both adults and kids. We would have the opportunity to donate all through the year to raise money for Heifer. A money jar was fixed for the donations, and the photo of a little girl from Peru with her arm around a llama was taped on the jar. Together we would buy a llama.

A chart went up on the refrigerator with 150 blocks. Every time a dollar was donated, one block would be colored. Minimum donation was 25¢ for ¼ of a block. Once we reached \$150.00 we would buy a llama, but not as a gift. We would buy a llama just because we wanted to. Just because we liked the picture of the little girl now taped to our money jar. When that project was done, we would start over to buy another animal with another chart and photo on the money jar.

We gathered on Christmas Day for our family celebration, exchanged our Heifer cards, and then watched the kids open family presents. Our traditional Christmas meal was laced with discussion about our new project. The jar and the chart were successfully begun with some initial donations.

By Christmas, Morgan's fortune had grown to \$70.00. I think you know, dear reader, what is coming next.

The day after Christmas Morgan's mom told me that Morgan wanted to put all of her \$70.00 into the jar to buy a llama for that little girl on the money jar. She was dollar savvy and knew that if she did so, she would be a full year behind in her quest for a water slide. She was willing and eager to contribute.

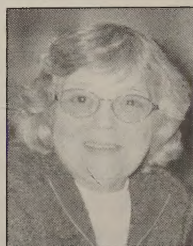
Her mother wisely told her that if she did that then the rest of us would not have as much of a chance to help. She understood. At seven years old she understood. Seven years and two months.

She put her dollar into the jar and colored in one of the blocks. She was satisfied with leaving something for others in the family to contribute. Smiling she said that

was only the first time. She would put a little more in later.

So thank you, Morgan and all of you children who have collected money and socks and toys for the victims of Katrina and the tsunami before that. Thanks to all you young boys who shaved your heads when a pal was going through chemo. Thanks as well to all of the young women who had bake sale after bake sale to help find a cure for breast cancer. We pin our hopes on you. You show us the way and light our path. You bless us and maybe, even, you will save us.

It has been claimed that if women were in charge of the world there would be peace on earth and war more. I think that, perhaps, if we followed the hearts of the children, no one would ever be hungry or poor again.



Sister Margaret Cessna, H.M., a sister of the Humility of Mary, is a writer from Cleveland, Ohio.

Book Review

Hold Fast to Hope: Help for Caregivers of Those with Traumatic Injuries, by Linda Perrone Rooney, D. Min. Totawa, New Jersey: Resurrection Press, 2006. 96 pages. \$6.95.

The essence of this book is encapsulated in the title. This book is a simple and practical guide for maintaining a sense of hope in the midst of trauma and tragedy. The reader will discover that this central theme of hope is woven throughout the book. Hope was the dominant motivating force as the author assumed her role of caregiver for her husband, Joe. Rooney describes hope as the underrated healer, "Hope is what humanity needs in the 21st century; it's what all people need as they face life and its unending challenges." This summarizes the author's conviction and experience.

Rooney, through appropriate personal examples, reminds us that hope is the only remedy for finding meaning in the midst of tragedy. Hope is the Christian perspective which constantly finds God in the now, whether that now is one of joy or sadness, tragedy or pain.

Although the book is written specifically for caregivers of those who have experienced traumatic injuries, it has application far beyond that. It is a carefully developed manual for all caregivers.

Rooney writes not from mere theory but rather from the perspective of experience, having been the caregiver for her husband after a traumatic injury. Rooney integrates her professional background in ministry with her indomitable faith.

The book is filled with nuggets of wisdom that combine the simple with the practical: always take an assertive role when it comes to the health or emotional needs of the person you love and of yourself; never allow yourself to be manipulated into a passive role; balance your rights and your needs with your obligations; take personal responsibility for situations over which you feel minimal control. By following the gems of wisdom the reader is helped to experience hope and to avoid the option of descending into a state of powerlessness or depression.

—Loughlan Sofield, S.T., M.